

AN ATLAS-HISTORY OF
THE SECOND GREAT WAR

VOLUME NINE

*AN ATLAS-HISTORY OF THE
SECOND GREAT WAR*

VOL. I SEPT 1939 TO JAN 1940
VOL. II JAN 1940 TO JULY 1940
VOL. III JULY 1940 TO JAN. 1941
VOL. IV JAN 1941 TO JULY 1941
VOL. V JULY 1941 TO JAN 1942
VOL. VI JAN 1942 TO JULY 1942
VOL. VII JULY 1942 TO JAN 1943
VOL. VIII JAN 1943 TO AUG 1943
VOL. IX SEPT 1943 TO APRIL 1944

Vol. IX—September 1943 to April 1944

AN ATLAS - HISTORY OF
THE SECOND GREAT WAR

by
J. F. HORRABIN

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS LTD
LONDON EDINBURGH PARIS MELBOURNE
TORONTO AND NEW YORK

All rights reserved

THOMAS NELSON & SONS LTD

3 HENRIETTA STREET, LONDON, W C.2
PARKSIDE WORKS, EDINBURGH

25 RUE DENFERT-ROCHEREAU, PARIS
312 FLINDERS STREET, MELBOURNE

91-93 WELLINGTON STREET WEST, TORONTO
385 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK

Volume IX first published September 1944

LIST OF CONTENTS

BREAKING UP THE AXIS

- 398 The Surrender of Italy
- 399 Italy's War Gains, 1940-43

THE AIR WAR

- 400 Air War on the Reich
- 401 R A F and Luftwaffe
- 402 The Air Offensive on Northern France
- 403 Italy as a Bombing Base
- 404 The Bombers go Farther East

THE WAR IN RUSSIA

- 405 The Russian Tide Rolls On
- 406 The Battle for Smolensk
- 407 The Advance to the Dnieper
- 408 The "Donbas" Regained
- 409 The Battles of the Dnieper
- 410 The Struggle in the Dnieper Bend
- 411 The Battle of the Kiev Salient (1)
- 412 The Battle of the Kiev Salient (2)
- 413 The Battle of the Kiev Salient (3)
- 414 The Battle of the Kiev Salient (4)
- 415 Leningrad Offensive (1)
- 416 Leningrad Offensive (2)
- 417 The Trap at Kanyev
- 418 The Red Army's Great Achievement
- 419 Russia and the Poles

THE WAR IN SOUTH ITALY

- 420 The Campaign in Italy (1)
- 421 The Battles of the Salerno Beaches
- 422 The Campaign in Italy (2)
- 423 The Campaign in Italy (3)
- 424 The Germans evacuate Sardinia

- 425 The Liberation of Corsica
- 426 The Campaign in Italy (4)
- 427 The Anzio Beach-head

MEDITERRANEAN AND BALKANS

- 428 Setback in the Dodecanese
- 429 Resistance grows in Yugoslavia
- 430 Yugoslavia a Federal State?
- 431 The Position of Bulgaria

THE WAR AT SEA

- 432 Allied Bases in the Azores
- 433 *Tirpitz* and *Scharnhorst*

THE WAR IN ASIA

- 434 The South-east Asia Command
- 435 Operations in Burma
- 436 Over the Himalayas to China
- 437 The War in China

THE PACIFIC WAR

- 438 The Western Pacific (1) - The Solomons
- 439 The Western Pacific (2) New Guinea and New Britain
- 440 The Western Pacific (3) : New Objectives
- 441 Trouble in Lebanon
- 442 The Finns discuss Peace Terms
- 443 Pro-German Forces in South America

DIAGRAMS OF ECONOMIC ISSUES

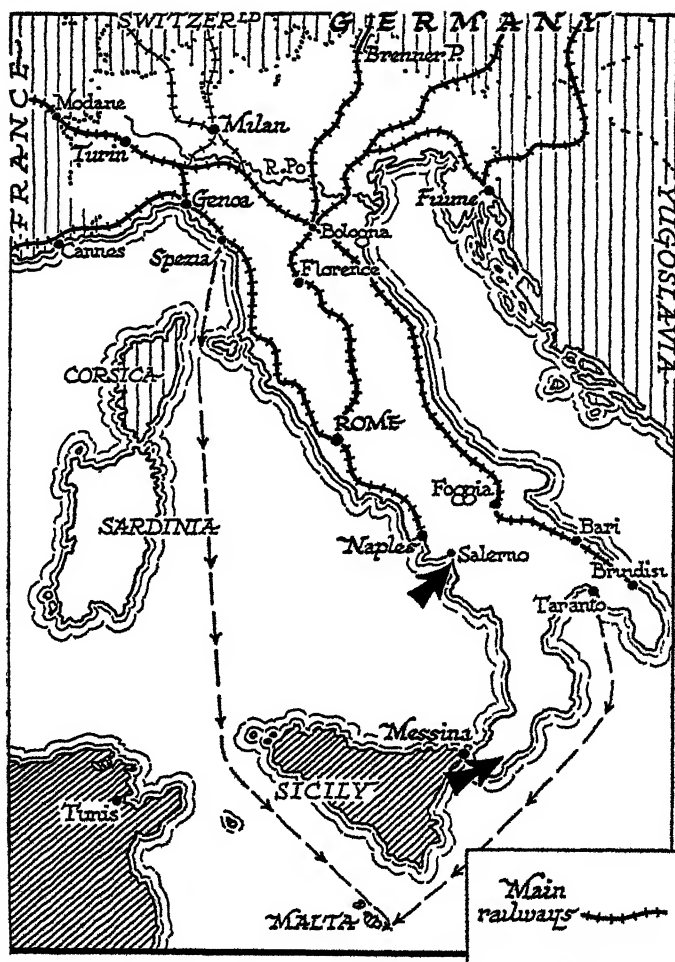
- 444 Britain's War Debts
- 445 Financing Expenditure
- 446 Trade Disputes
- 447 American Inflation
- 448 Air-raid Casualties

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

AN otherwise appreciative reviewer of the last volume of this *Atlas-History* expressed regret that it did not discuss—and criticize—war policy and strategy. I take this opportunity of emphasizing that it pretends to do nothing of the sort ; but only to chronicle, in concise form, the outstanding events, military or political, of the struggle. Even if I joined the company of amateur strategists, my comments would in all probability be out of date, or at any rate quite overshadowed by more topical controversies, by the time my words were in print. So I am content to make a bare record of the facts, which, though they may be ultimately modified or supplemented by fuller information, are as accurate as they can be made at the present time.

A chronicle of this kind cannot but convey an impression of somewhat cold-blooded detachment. I should like also, therefore, to say that when I use phrases like the Red Army “ironing out two salients” or “liquidating” an enemy force, or this or that German city being made the “target of repeated assaults” from the air, or the 5th Army’s “two weeks of bitter fighting” on the Salerno beaches, I am, I hope, as conscious as anyone else of the blood and tears and suffering, on both sides, which those dry phrases conceal. No-one ought to look back at the successive events of this war without reminding himself of the debt he owes to countless unknown heroes ; a debt which can only be repaid if we do whatever is in our power to ensure that such things need never happen again.

J. F. H.

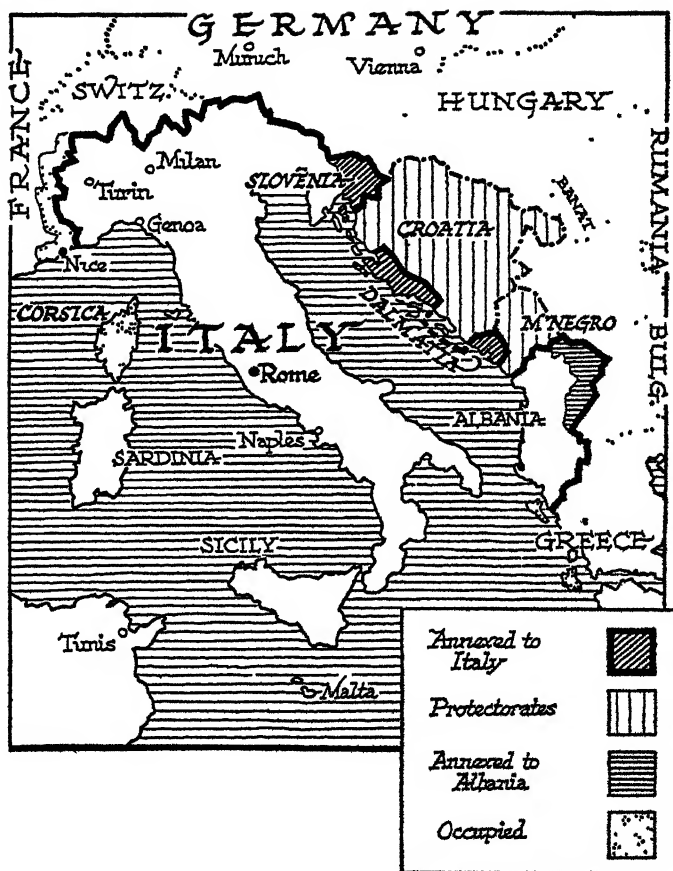


The Surrender of Italy—

ON 8th September, six weeks after the fall of Mussolini, Marshal Badoglio's government surrendered unconditionally to the Allies. Five days earlier British 8th Army troops had landed on the "toe" of the Italian mainland (see later map, 420). In his proclamation to the Italian people Badoglio declared that the struggle against the Allies had ended, but that Italian forces would "oppose attacks from any other quarter." In a telegram to Hitler he said, "It cannot be demanded of any people that they should continue the fight when every legitimate hope—I do not say of victory but even of defence—has vanished."

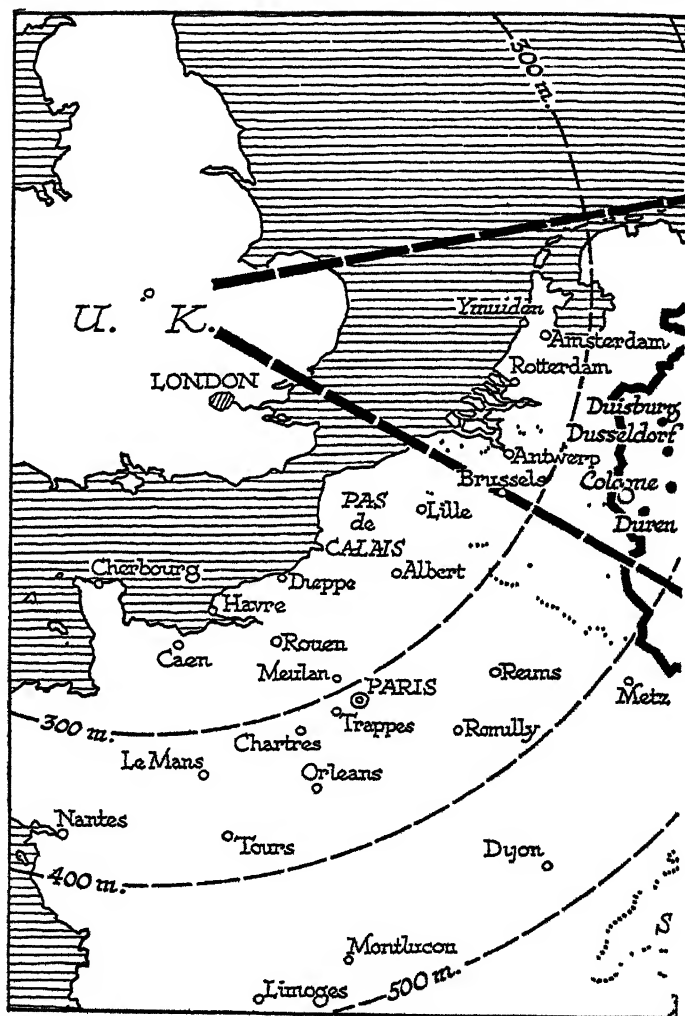
German troops promptly occupied Rome and all the northern and central parts of the peninsula, liberated Mussolini, and set up a Fascist government, under Nazi control. A large part of Italy thus became overnight one of the occupied countries. German divisions were rushed south to face the invading British and American Armies.

The entire Italian fleet surrendered to the Allies. From Spezia and Taranto they sailed for Malta. One battleship, the *Roma*, was sunk by a German bombing attack off Sardinia, while on its way south with the squadron from Spezia.

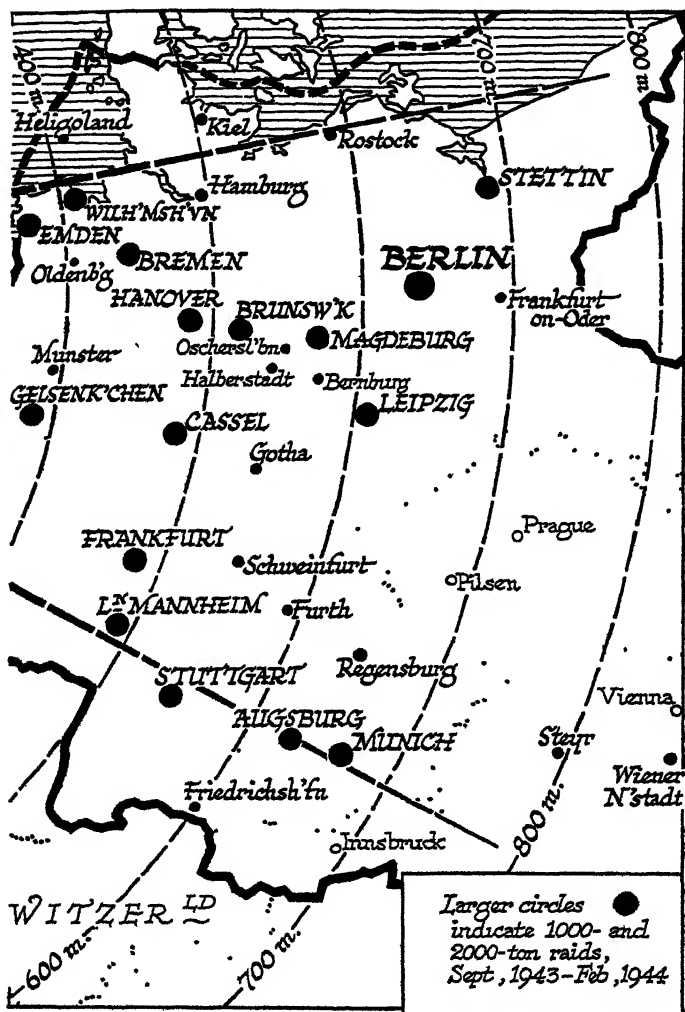


Italy's War Gains, 1940-43—

THE Italian surrender immediately affected the situation in all the territories taken by Italy, or occupied wholly or partly by Italian forces, outside the peninsula. Southern Slovenia and parts of the Dalmatian coast had been annexed to the Italian crown, and a large area of south-eastern Yugoslavia absorbed into Albania. Montenegro and Croatia had been made nominally independent states but were both to a considerable extent Italian protectorates. Corsica (French) and the Greek Ionian Islands were in Italian military occupation. Germany was thus left with the necessity of exercising control in all these areas; and one immediate result was the even more determined and widespread resistance offered by the Partisans in Yugoslavia (see Map 429) and by the patriots in Greece. (For events in the Dodecanese Islands, see Map 428.)



the Reich—



Air War on the Reich—

“OUR whole air offensive,” said Mr. Churchill in his review of the war made in Parliament on 22nd February, “constitutes the foundation on which our plans for foreign invasion stand.” He was speaking during a week which had seen the attacks of British and U.S. airmen on Germany reach a pitch of intensity never previously attained. Speaking a few days later, the Air Minister, Sir Archibald Sinclair, declared that “it might well be that historians of the future, looking back upon this period between the February and March moons (1944), would see it as one of the decisive stages of the whole war.” During that week, besides the main attacks on the factories, more than 600 German fighters were shot down by the Allied raiders.

But the February offensive was only the peak of a long series of attacks on Germany continued throughout the entire winter, in which aircraft factories and assembly plants in every part of the Reich were damaged or destroyed; and the “peak” was continued throughout March and on into April. The U.S. air force by day and the R.A.F. by night carried an ever-increasing weight of bombs. The object in view, in Mr. Churchill’s words, was “the complete elimination of Germany’s fighter defences—both in the air and in the factories.”

No fewer than 16 German towns and cities were the targets of concentrated attacks in which a weight of more than 1,000 tons of bombs—in some cases more than 2,000

—was dropped on a single area in less than an hour ; Stuttgart had over 3,000 tons on 15th March, and Frankfurt the same weight on the 22nd. Several of these towns suffered two or more such raids ; and many others were bombed again and again on a scale of only slightly less intensity

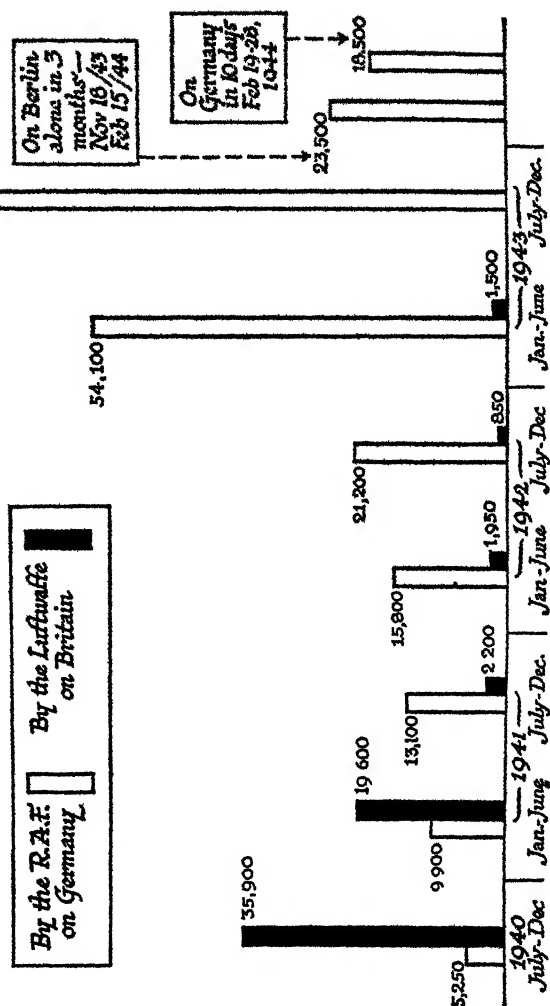
Berlin was attacked in a series of heavy raids from 18th November onwards (see diagram on next page) The fiercest of all these attacks were those on the nights of 15th February and 24th March, when 2,500 tons of bombs were dropped in a little over half an hour—or more than 80 tons a minute. By the beginning of March U.S. heavy bombers were continuing the assault on the German capital in daylight.

Swedish reports in early April stated that the R.A.F. had carried out extensive mine-laying operations in the southern Baltic.

From the beginning of the war to the time when the Prime Minister spoke in February, the R.A.F. had lost 38,300 pilots and air crews killed, 10,400 missing, and over 10,000 aircraft

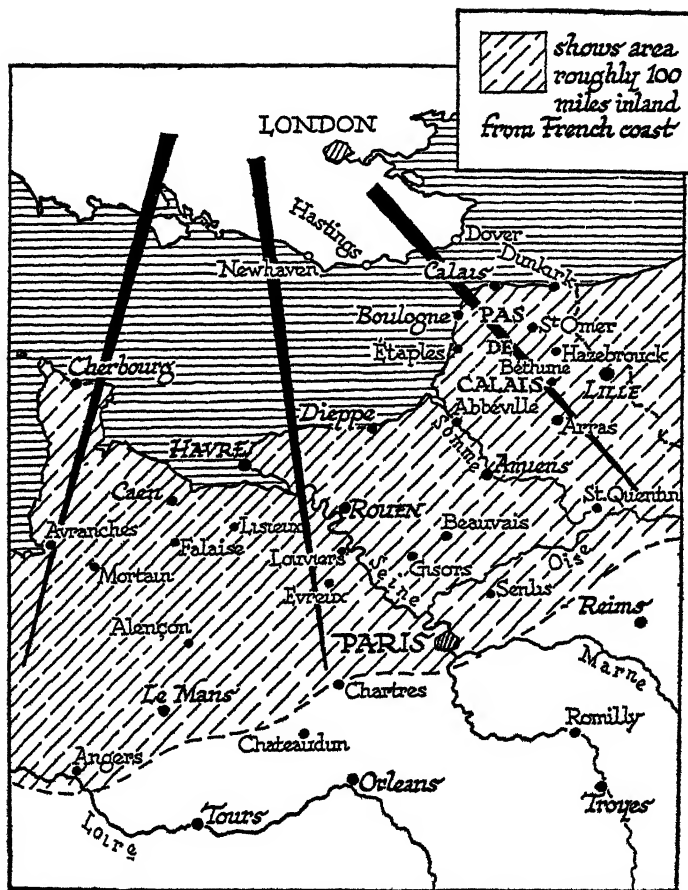
Tonnage of Bombs dropped on Germany & on G. Britain

(887)



R.A.F. and Luftwaffe—

SOME idea of the tremendous increase in the weight of R.A.F. attacks on Germany, and of the decreasing attacks by the Luftwaffe on Britain, can be gained from this diagram. As will be seen, the tonnage of bombs dropped on Berlin alone in the three months, 18th November 1943 to 15th February 1944, was almost equal to that dropped by the Luftwaffe on all Britain during the three years 1941-43; while in ten days, 19th to 28th February 1944, a weight of bombs was dropped on Germany equal to more than half that dropped by the Luftwaffe on Britain during the last six months of 1940, at the height of the "blitz" period.



The Air Offensive on Northern France—

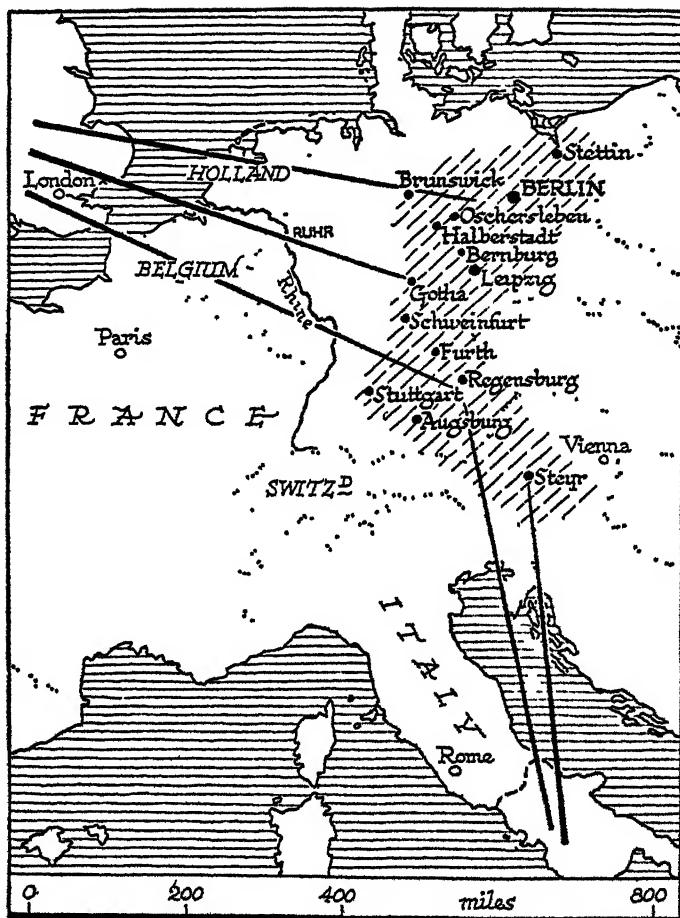
DURING the first four months of 1944, Allied air attacks on targets in northern France were on a constantly increasing scale. Hundreds of sorties were made daily, on railways, factories, docks, airfields, and "military installations" of every description. The coastal area nearest to Britain, the Pas de Calais, was the theatre of practically unceasing air war, by day and by night. The Germans were being steadily pushed back from effective occupation of the Channel coastline.

In many of the raids more than 2,000 aircraft, British and U.S. bombers with fighter escorts, took part; and enemy losses in fighter planes grew steadily heavier.



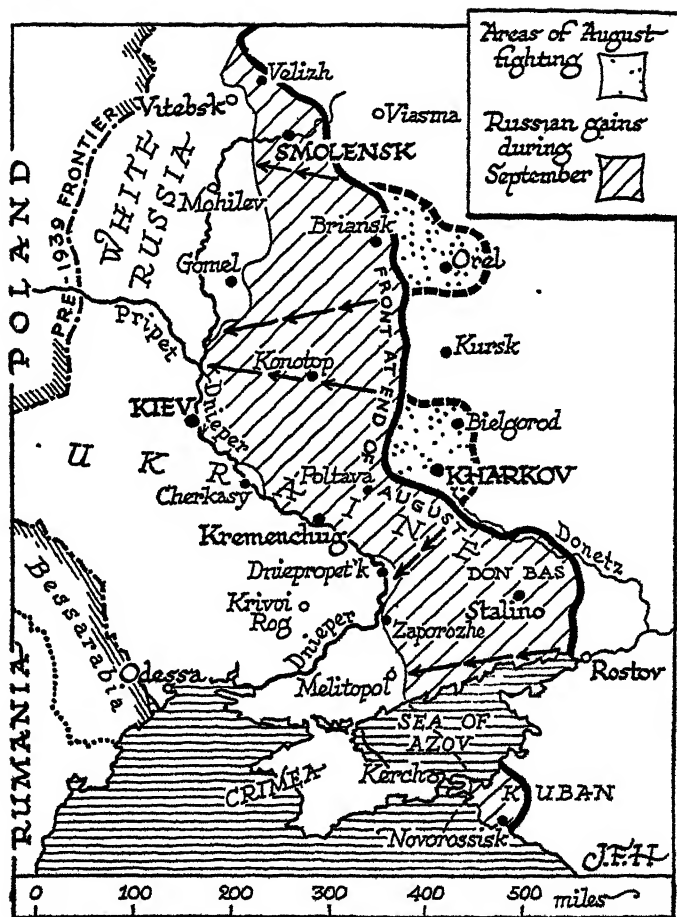
Italy as a Bombing Base—

THE Allied possession of southern Italy made possible a further extension of the air war on Germany and the satellite countries. From the first days of the invasion the R.A.F. and the American air force had played an active part in support of the Allied forces, bombing the Italian railways and the industrial centres of the north. But very soon their field of operations widened considerably. Piræus and other Greek ports, German concentrations in Yugoslavia, and Sofia, the Bulgarian capital, were all repeatedly attacked. The stream of heavy bombers from the U.S. increased, and early in November Allied Headquarters announced the creation of a new U.S. Mediterranean Air Force, with General Spaatz in command. The air offensive against southern Germany rapidly developed. Wiener Neustadt, Steyr, Innsbruck, Graz, and the Brenner were the targets of successful attacks. Then the bombers' range went still farther north—to Augsburg and Regensburg. In February came the first co-ordinated attack on targets in south-eastern Germany from bases in Italy and Britain (*cf* following map). A little later air assaults began on Budapest, Bucharest, and Ploesti, the Rumanian oil centre.



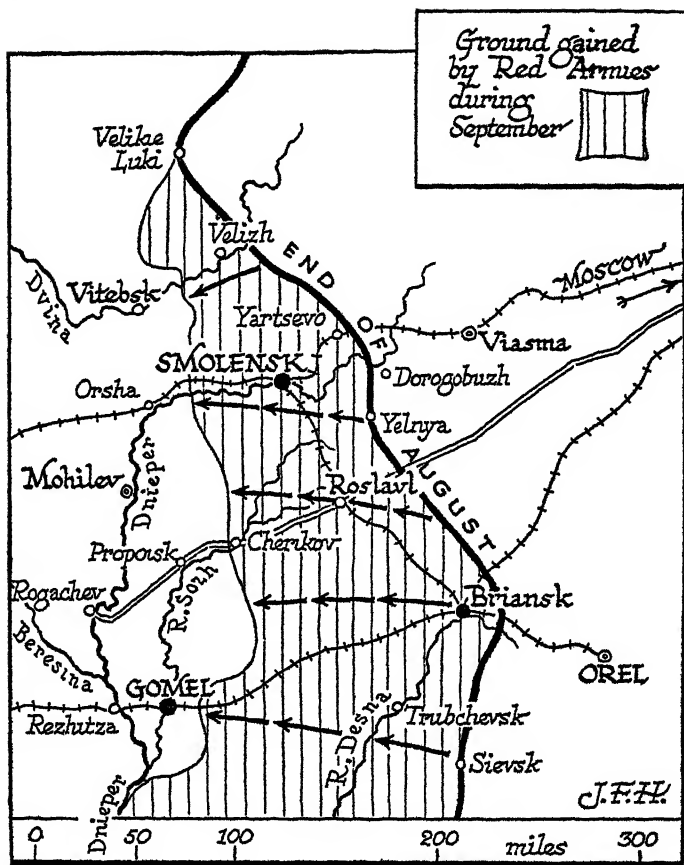
The Bombers go Farther East—

THE terrific intensification of the air war on the Reich during the early months of 1944 made clear one significant fact. The great majority of the targets attacked were in central and eastern Germany. No longer were the towns of the Rhineland or the Ruhr the chief objectives. Berlin, Stettin, Leipzig, Gotha, Schweinfurt, Regensburg—all these lay far to the east of the line of the Rhine. If German industry had retreated before the fury of earlier air attacks, it was now being followed by the bombers to the farther side of Germany.



The Russian Tide Rolls on—

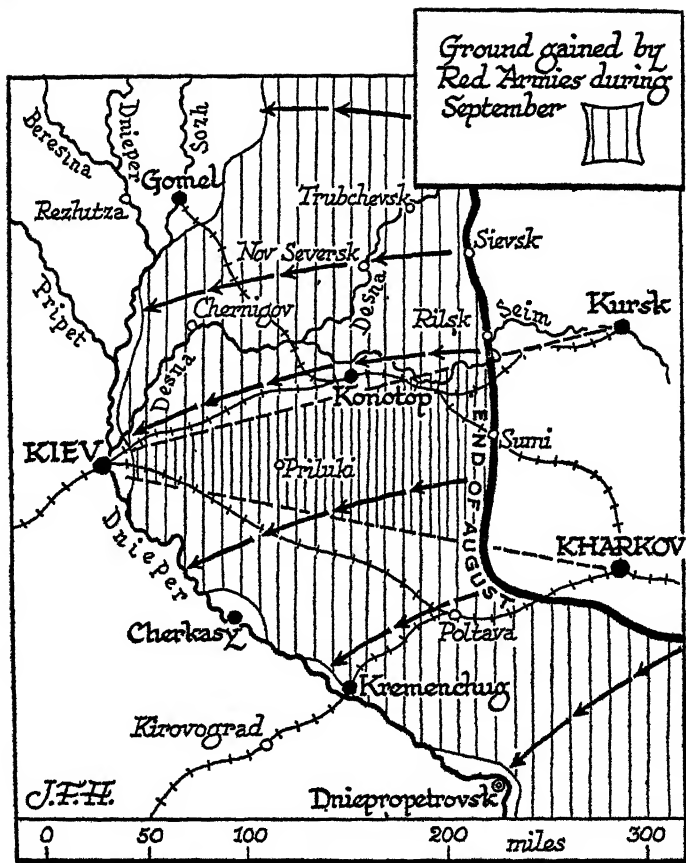
At the end of August 1943 the Red Armies had taken the offensive on the whole front from Smolensk to the Kuban. The August fighting, following on the failure of the German summer offensive in the Orel-Kursk sectors, had ironed out the two great salients north and south of Kursk, and the Russians were once more in possession of Orel and Kharkov. The advances during September were as spectacular as those of the Nazis during the first few weeks of their original invasion of the U.S.S.R. in 1941. The German armies were driven back towards the Dnieper distances varying from 80 to 200 miles. By the end of the month the Russians had taken Smolensk, were at the gates of Kiev, had recovered the whole of the Donetz Basin in the southern Ukraine, and, south of the Sea of Azov, had taken Novorossisk and were pushing the enemy back across the Kerch Strait. (See three following maps for further details of the September advances.)



The Battle for Smolensk—

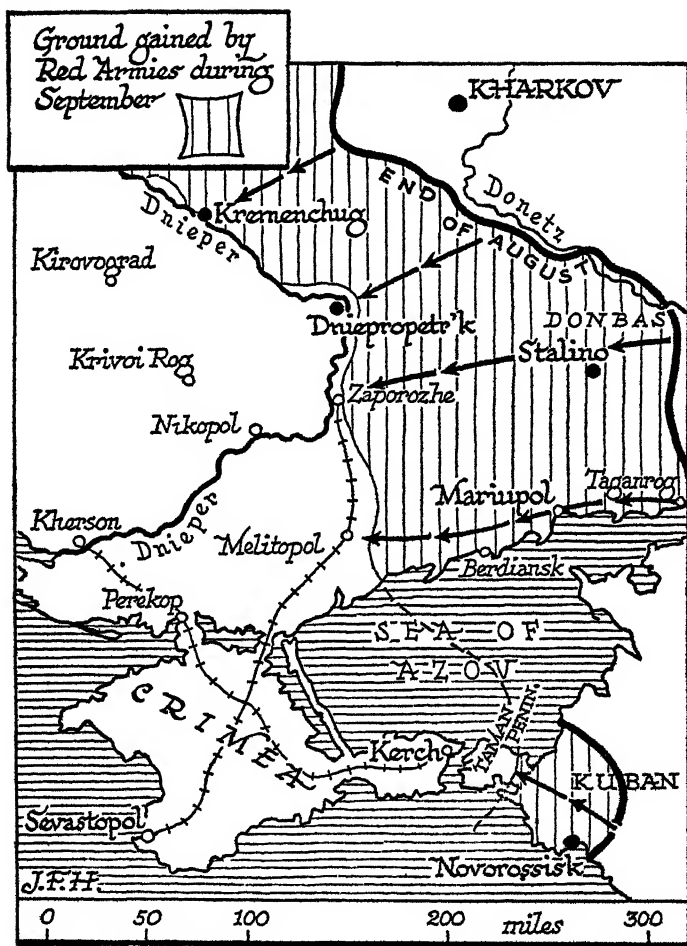
THE northern sector of the Russian offensive extended from north of Smolensk to south of Briansk. This last-named town was the only remaining link in the chain of German strongholds west of Moscow—Rzhev, Viasma, Briansk, Orel—which had been the main bulwarks of the German central front. It fell to the Russians on 16th September, after their forces to the south of it had already reached and crossed the Desna. Within four days the whole Desna "Eastern Wall" had been breached and the Soviet forces were advancing towards Gomel.

North of Briansk the advance against Roslavl and Smolensk was at once pushed forward. On 24th September, Roslavl was taken, and on the following day Smolensk fell to the Red Armies. The front was still further extended northward by an advance west of Velizh, towards Vitebsk.



The Advance to the Dneiper—

THE greatest advance in actual territorial extent made by the Red Armies during the month of September was on the central sector of the battle front, west of Kursk and Kharkov, in the direction of Kiev. In the very centre of this sector, from the line Rylsk-Sumi, the Russians concentrated powerful attacks towards Konotop, which was taken on 6th September. North of this attack, the Red Armies were advancing west of the Desna and threatening Chernigov. To the south the Germans fought hard in front of Poltava, but were finally routed, and the town taken by the Russians on 23rd September. Six days later the Russian advance had reached Kremenchug, on the Dnieper itself. At the same time the Soviet armies farther north had reached the river a few miles below Gomel, were in the eastern outskirts of Kiev, and held the Dnieper's eastern bank again south of the city, excepting for a German bridgehead at Cherkasy.

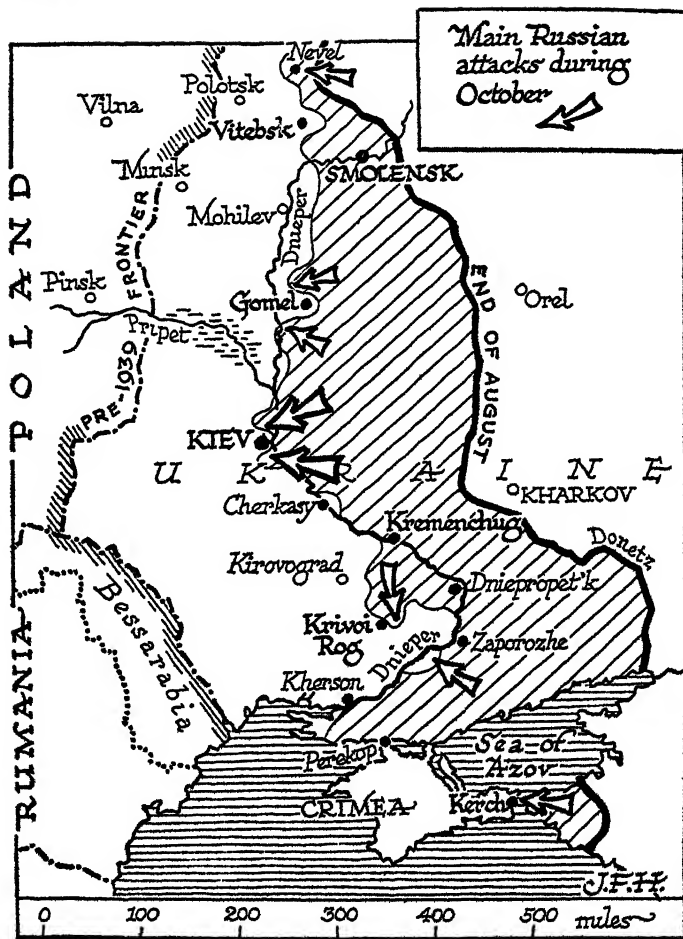


The "Donbas"

Retaken—

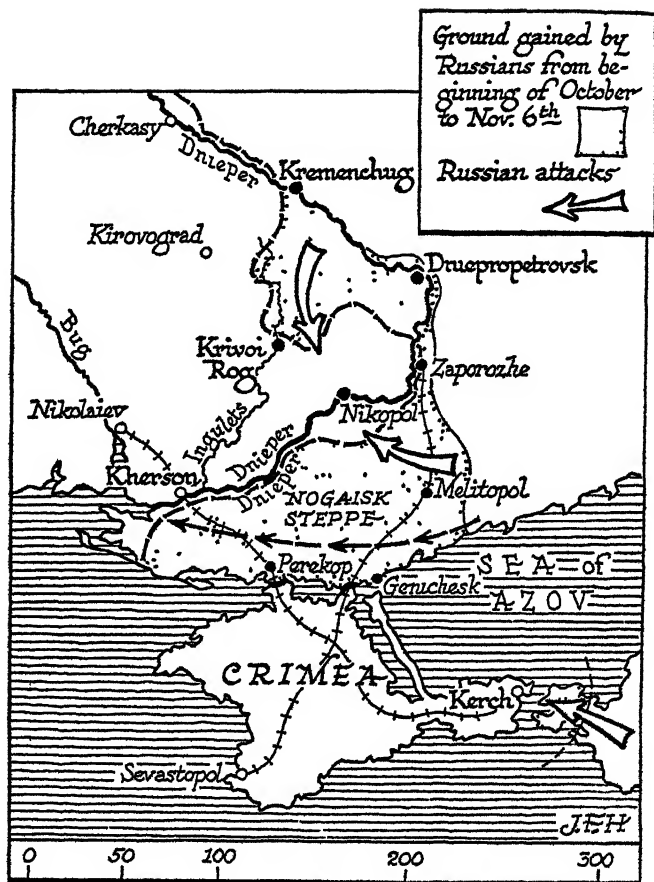
IN the southern sector of the front September saw the recapture by the Russians of the whole of the Donetz Basin, the most important coal and industrial region of the U.S.S.R. Stalino itself fell on 8th September, and scores of other towns in the region were liberated. The advance continued westward towards the Dnieper bend to the outskirts of Dniepropetrovsk and Zaporozhe, and along the northern coast of the sea of Azov from Taganrog to near Melitopol, on the rail line to the Crimea.

Farther south still the Russians took the last remaining German stronghold in the Caucasus—Novorossisk—and pushed on to the Taman peninsula, fronting the Kerch Strait.



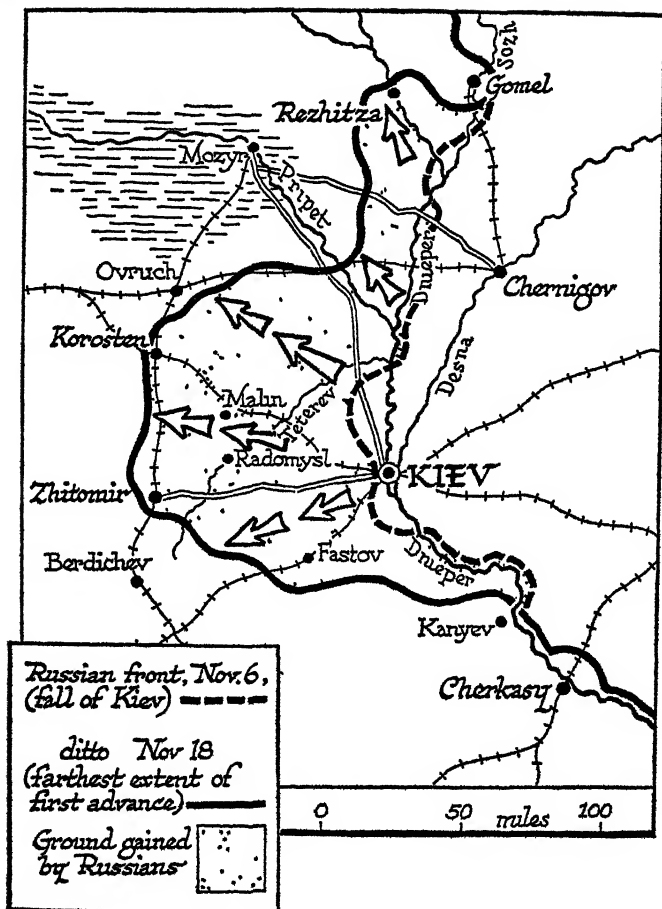
The Battles of the Dneiper—

IF the Russian advances during September had been striking, the German withdrawals over the whole immense front had been a brilliant piece of generalship. Now, during October, the enemy stood and fought along the Dneiper line. But though the rains had begun the Russians were pressing everywhere (*cf* this map with No. 405). North of Smolensk they captured Nevel. Towards the upper Dneiper they gained ground on either side of the German strongpoint of Gomel. Lower down the river they forced three crossings—north and south of Kiev, and at Kremenchug. This last thrust, supplemented by the taking of Dniepropetrovsk, developed into a southward attack towards Krivoi Rog, aiming at cutting off the enemy forces in the Dneiper bend (see next map). South of the lower reaches of the river they pressed forward across the Nogaïsk Steppe to the Dneiper mouth at Kherson, isolating the Crimea. They cleared the remaining enemy forces from the Kuban, and began attacks on Kerch itself.



The Struggle in the Dneiper Bend—

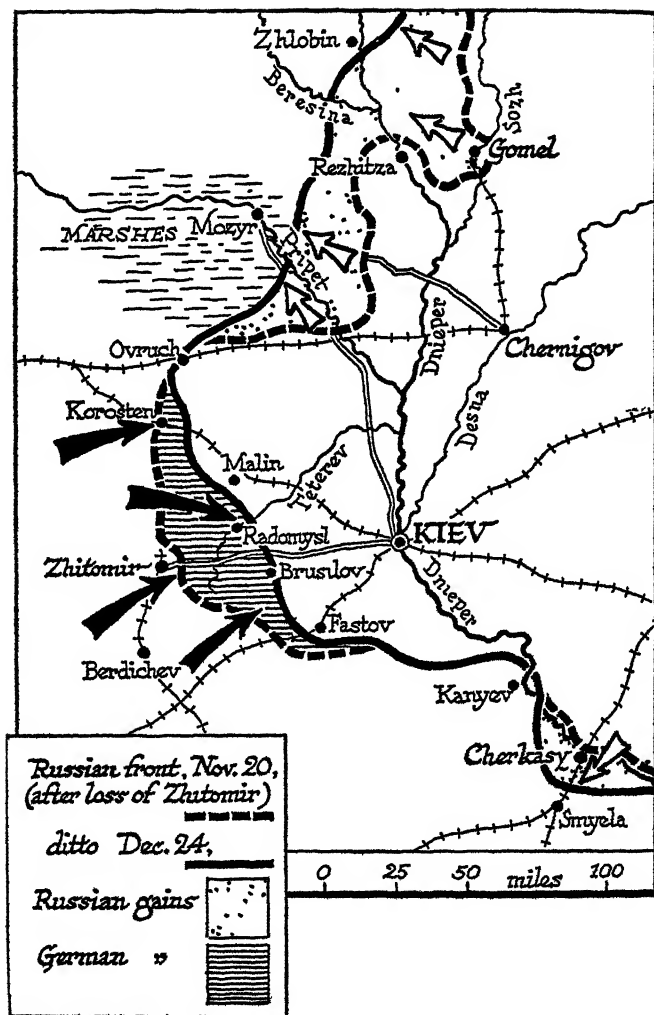
THE Russian thrust southward from Kremenchug all but succeeded in clearing the whole bend of the Dnieper of the enemy. But German resistance, based on the two bastions of Krivoi Rog and Nikopol, was stubborn; and the "pocket" of enemy forces between those two places held out against the fierce Russian endeavours to cut them off completely. Neither place was finally taken until February, after the Red Armies had at last driven a wedge between them and forced their way to the Ingulets River (*cf.* Map 417). But Perekop was captured, and the whole area between the lower Dnieper and the Crimea occupied by the Russians. German communications with the Crimea were now by sea only.



The Battle of the Kiev Salient (1)—

KIEV, at the eastern gates of which the Red Army had been battering for more than a month, fell on 5th November ; and without pause the Russians made a rapid advance west and north-west of the city. They entered Zhitomir on 12th November, and Korosten on the 17th. Farther north again they were pressing up the Pripet towards Mozyr, and west of Gomel in the region of Rezhitza.

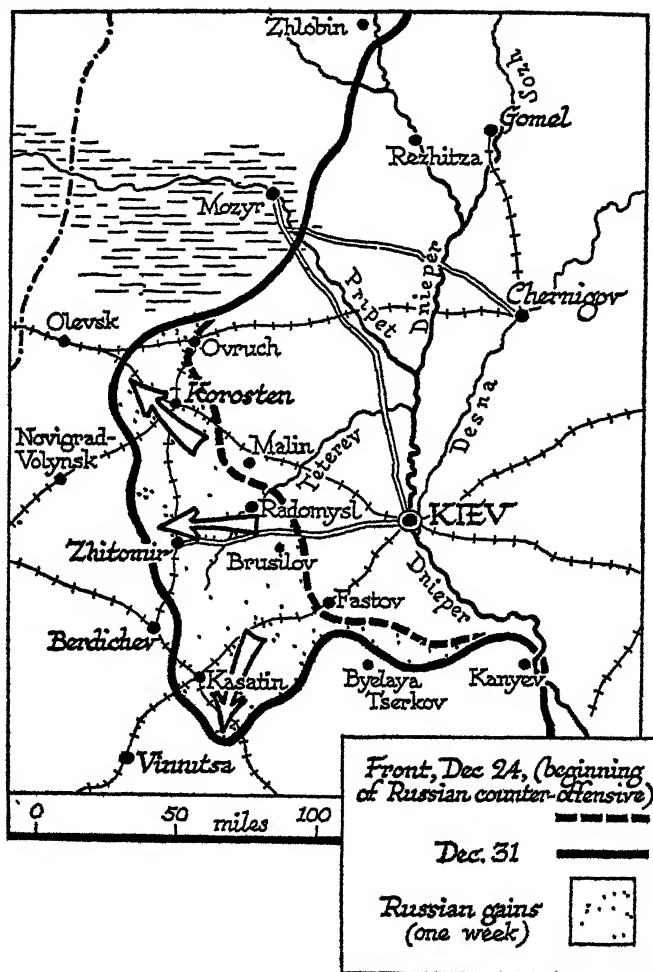
The advance in this Kiev area, the westernmost point reached by the Russians along the whole line, was a threat to all the German armies in the south (*cf.* Map 418). Von Manstein, the enemy commander, accordingly began a series of very heavy counter-attacks on the southern face of the Russian salient (see next map).



The Battle of the Kiev Salient (2)—

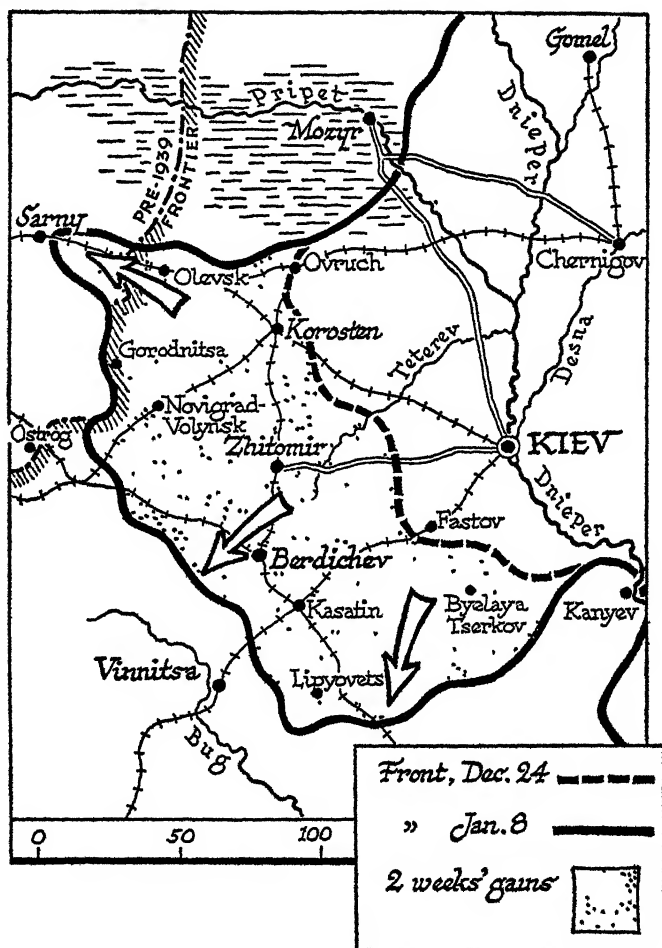
VON MANSTEIN'S counter-attacks were made with the strongest forces the Germans could concentrate in a single sector—according to some reports including one-third of all the enemy armour in Russia. They re-took Zhitomir a week after the Russians had entered it ; and they extended northward along the western face of the salient to Korosten. For more than a month, right up to Christmas Eve, desperate fighting went on in the whole of this area ; but at the end of it, after suffering enormous losses, the Germans had only pushed the Russians back some 25 miles towards Kiev.

Meantime, north of the salient, the Russians were still forcing their way up the Pripet, and had taken Gomel after encircling it from the west. South-east of Kiev they had wiped out the enemy bridgehead at Cherkasy, and begun attacks west of the river towards Smyela.



The Battle of the Kiev Salient (3)—

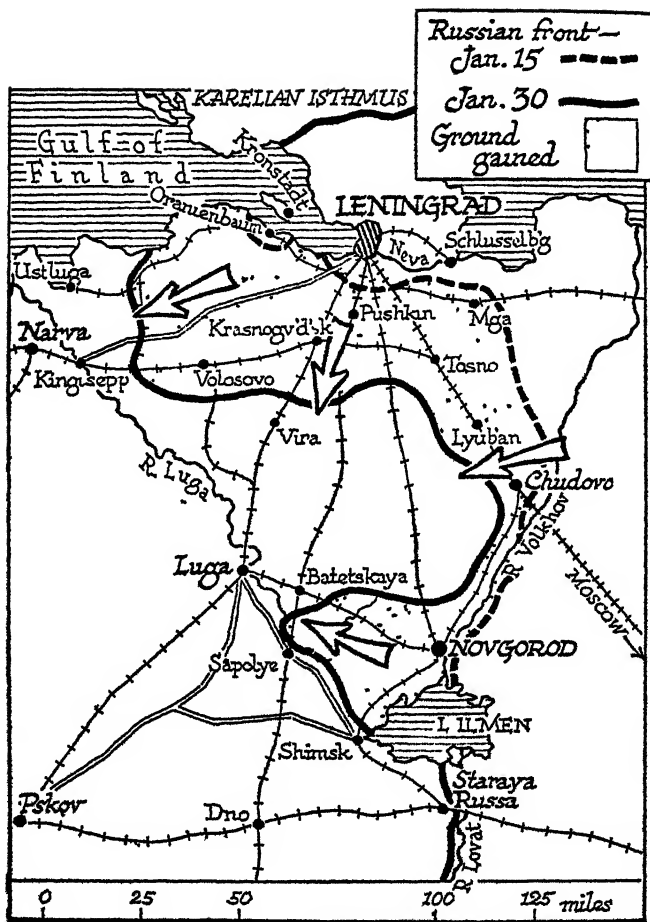
ON Christmas Eve Marshal Vatutin's armies in the Kiev salient began a counter-offensive. Within a week they had regained all and more than the ground taken by Von Manstein, and were still pressing rapidly westwards and south-westwards. Zhitomir and Korosten were once more taken, and passed. And between Zhitomir and Fastov they struck southwards towards Berdichev, Manstein's headquarters, and Vinnitsa. Marshal Stalin's Order of the Day, on 30th December, stated that the enemy front had been breached over a length of 180 miles, and that 8 enemy tank divisions and 14 infantry divisions had been routed.



The Battle of the Kiev Salient (4)—

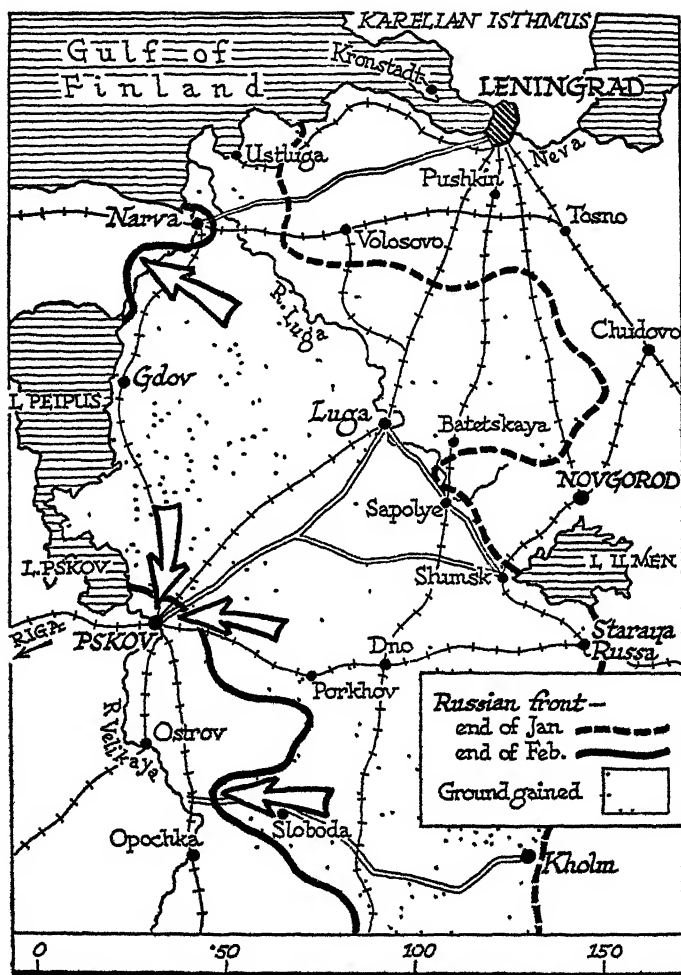
MARSHAL VATUTIN's counter-offensive rapidly became a resumed Russian offensive. From Korosten his forces pushed on through Olevsk, and crossed the pre-1939 Polish frontier. Due west of Kiev they took Novigrad-Volynsk and the border town of Gorodnitsa. South-west and south of the city they captured Berdichev and Byelaya-Tserkov, and advanced rapidly between these two places towards the Bug River. The Germans were still resisting strongly in front of Vinnitsa. But this southward Russian advance had left a dangerous German salient with its head at Kanyev, on the Dnieper some 60 miles south of Kiev (see Map 417).

The battle of the Kiev salient had been won. Another German attempt to stem the advancing Russian tide had failed.



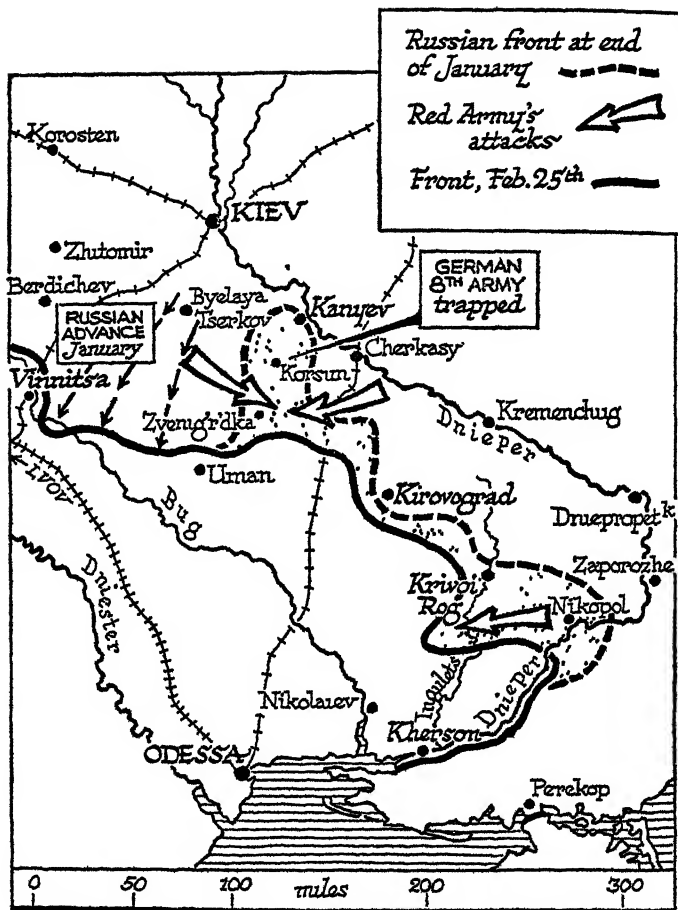
Leningrad Offensive (I)—

IN the middle of January, while the Russian attacks all along the Ukrainian front were still being maintained, a new offensive by the Red Army began at the northern end of the Soviet battle line—in front of Leningrad. It was launched from the Oramienbaum beach-head, held by the Russians throughout the entire siege of Leningrad, and was preceded by one of the heaviest artillery preparations of the war, which smashed the formidable zone of fortifications erected by the Germans around the city. A supplementary attack was launched along the Volkhov front, south-west of Leningrad. Within a fortnight the Russians had cleared the enemy from the Leningrad-Moscow railway, seized the rail junctions of Volosovo, Krasnogvardeisk and Tosno, taken Novgorod, and were pushing westward from Lake Ilmen towards Luga.



Leningrad Offensive (2)—

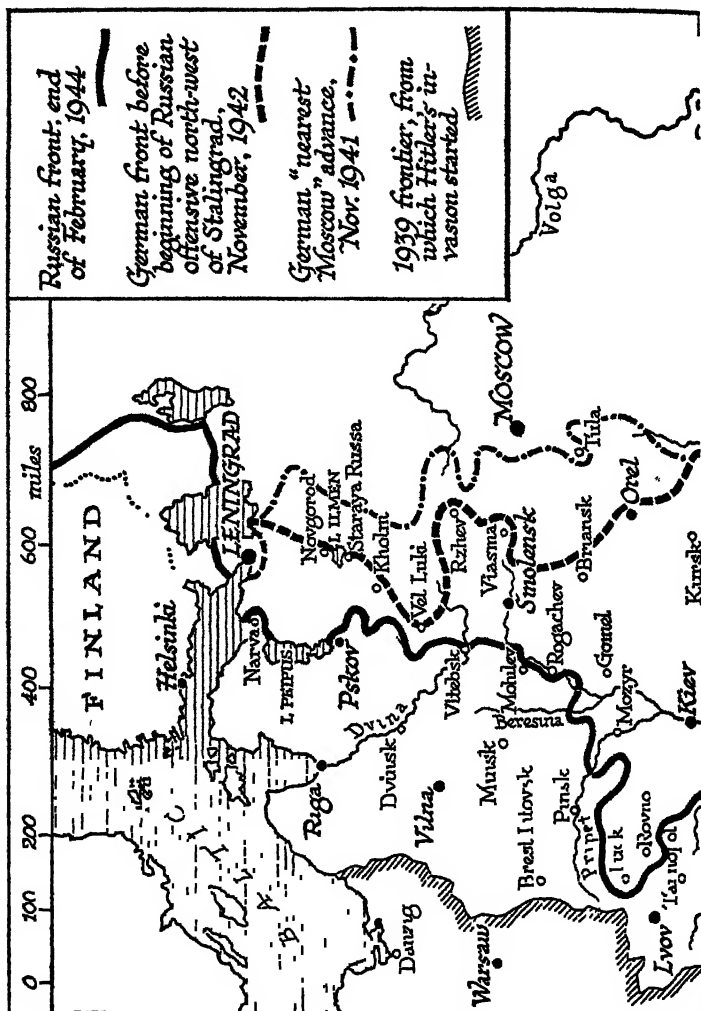
THROUGHOUT February the advance in the north continued, and the battle-front was pushed back to nearly 100 miles from Leningrad along the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland. The river Luga was reached and crossed, and all the eastern side of Lake Peipus liberated. By the middle of the month the offensive was extending southward. Staraya Russa, south of Lake Ilmen, was taken on the 19th, and two days later the Germans were in retreat from Kholm, 50 miles to the south again. Narva and Pskov were by this time both closely pressed. But in March the main Russian offensives once again shifted south, and for some weeks there was "nothing of significance to report" from this northern front.



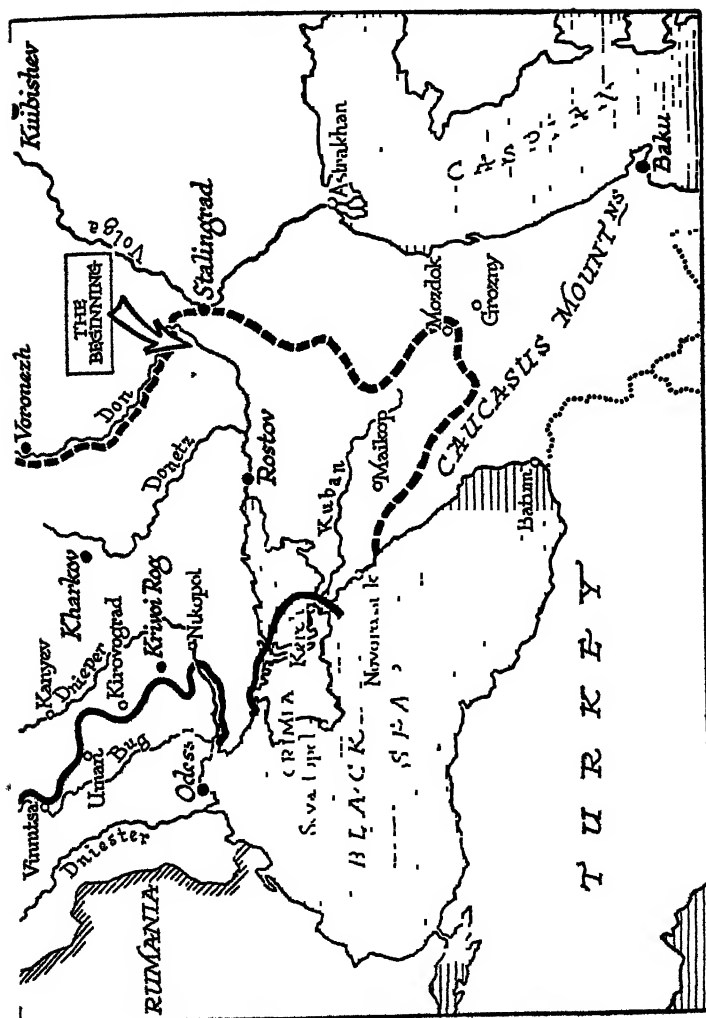
The Trap at Kanyev—

THE Russian advance during January south-west and south of Kiev (*cf* Map 414) had left a deep German salient running up to Kanyev, on the Dnieper. On 3rd February, Marshal Stalin announced from Moscow that Red Army forces striking south-east from Byelaya-Tserkov had linked up with troops advancing westward from north of Kirovograd. The Germans in the salient were cut off. Two weeks' desperate fighting followed, and Manstein made repeated heavy attacks from the southern end of the salient in an attempt to relieve the trapped divisions. On 17th February, Moscow announced "the completion of the operation for the annihilation of 10 German divisions and one brigade, forming part of the German 8th Army surrounded in the area of Korsun." The enemy had left over 50,000 killed on the battlefield, and 11,000 prisoners were taken by the Russians. The salient cleared, the Red Armies moved forward along the whole front from Vinnitsa to Krivoi Rog, crossing the Bug and reaching the Dniester by the middle of March.

Farther south, Nikopol, the German bridge-head on the lower Dnieper, had been taken on 8th February, and a swift advance was made by the Russians westwards towards the Ingulets. Krivoi Rog, the last centre of any industrial-economic importance held by the Germans in Soviet territory, fell on 22nd February. Three weeks later the Russians were in Kherson, and 36,000 Germans had been killed and 14,000 captured in the rout of the German 6th Army between the Ingulets and the lower Bug. The Russian advance along the coast continued. Odessa was entered on 10th April.



Great Achievement—



The Red Army's Great Achievement—

ON 22nd February, the eve of Red Army Day, Marshal Stalin broadcast an Order of the Day addressed to "Comrades of the Red Army and the Red Navy, sergeants, officers, and generals, and men and women guerillas." He pointed out that the Red Army had fought its way hundreds of miles forward, and had cleared the enemy from nearly three-fourths of the Soviet territories he had occupied. For over a year the Red Armies had been waging victorious offensives. "Hitlerite Germany," he declared, "is moving irrevocably towards catastrophe."

The turn of the tide in Russia began with the Red Army's offensive north-west of Stalingrad, in November 1942. By the end of that year the Russians were nearing Rostov, and the enemy was in full retreat from the southern Caucasus.

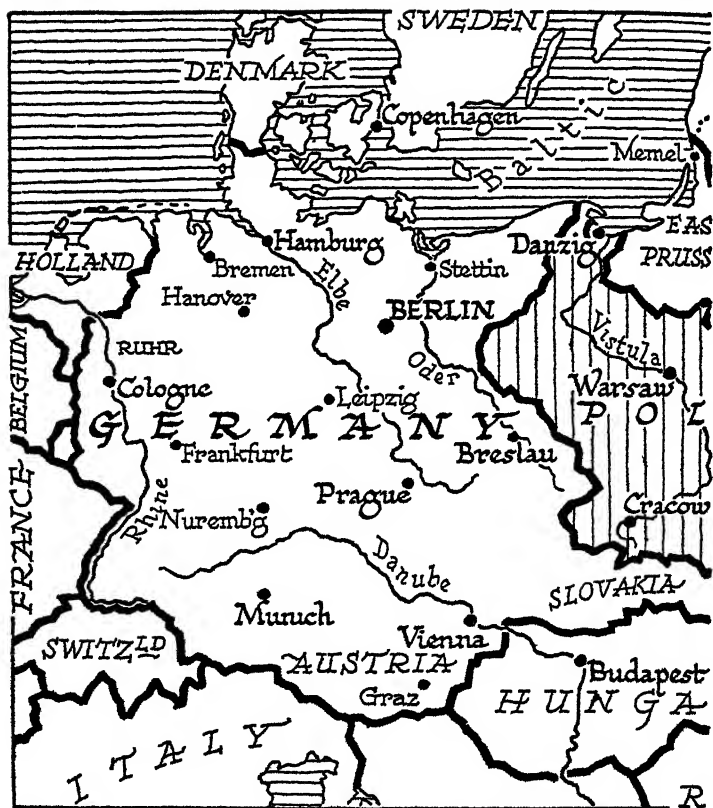
The spring and summer of 1943 saw the front extended up to Orel, and the crushing defeat of the German attempted offensive in the Orel-Kursk zone. By autumn the Germans had been pushed back to the Dnieper, and the winter campaign of 1943-44 witnessed the liquidation of the whole long line of German bastions along the river, from Gomel down to Nikopol. So was foiled, in Stalin's words, "the German plan to carry on a prolonged defensive war on Soviet territory."

The Russian front, by the middle of April 1944, had

already at some points reached the 1939 Polish frontier, the line from which Hitler's invasion had started in the summer of 1941. It was facing the Carpathian passes on the extreme eastern borders of Czechoslovakia ; and a considerable area of northern Rumania was in possession of the Red Army.

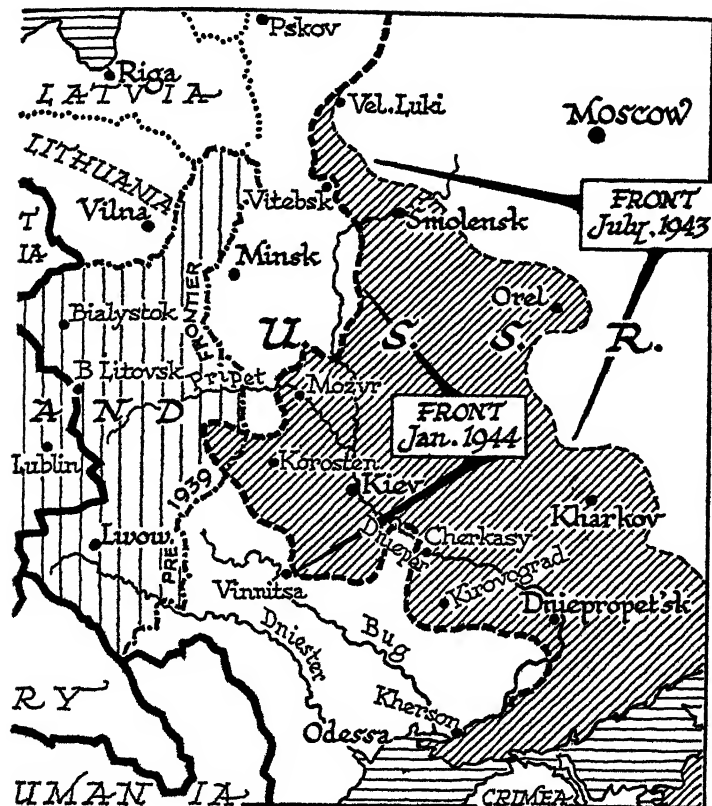
Early in April came the attack on the Crimea, from Perekop in the north and Kerch in the east ; and within little more than a week the whole peninsula, excepting only the fortress of Sevastopol, had been retaken from the enemy

Well might Mr. Henry Wallace, Vice-president of the United States, declare in a statement on Red Army Day, " We have seen a mighty people achieve a sacrificial singleness of purpose in this war which is unique in human history. From a defensive struggle against the horrors of aggression, the Russian armies have moved forward to a powerful offensive war for liberty."

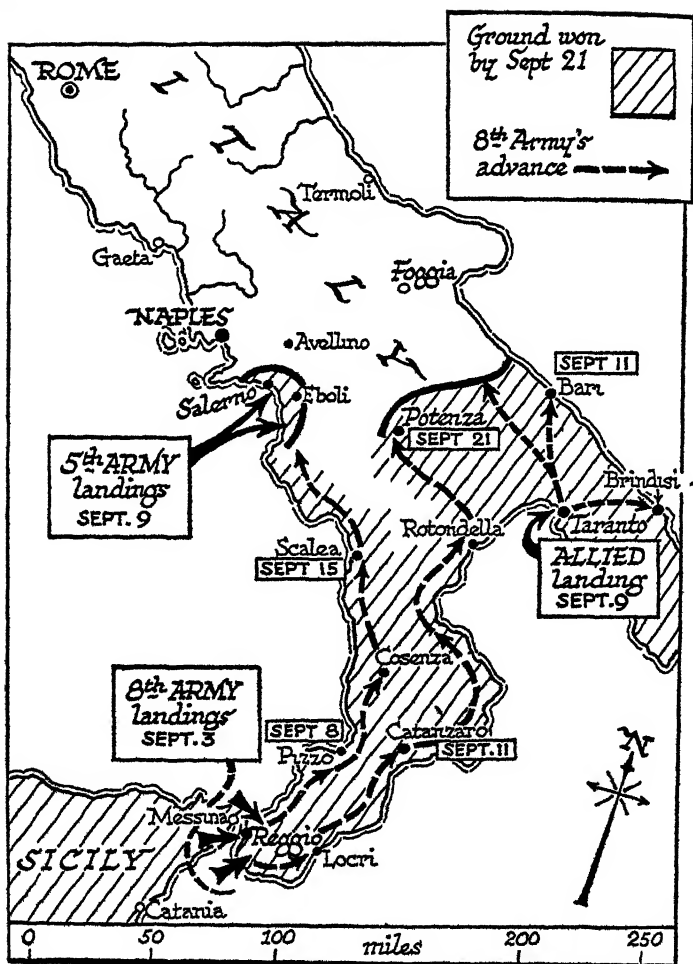


THE Russian advance into what, until 1939, was eastern Poland brought to a head again the differences between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government in London, which refused to accept the Russian offer of the Curzon Line (see Vol. VIII, Map 382) as a reasonable frontier. Thereupon the Soviet Government declared that discussion was impossible, and Mr. Cordell Hull's

the Poles—

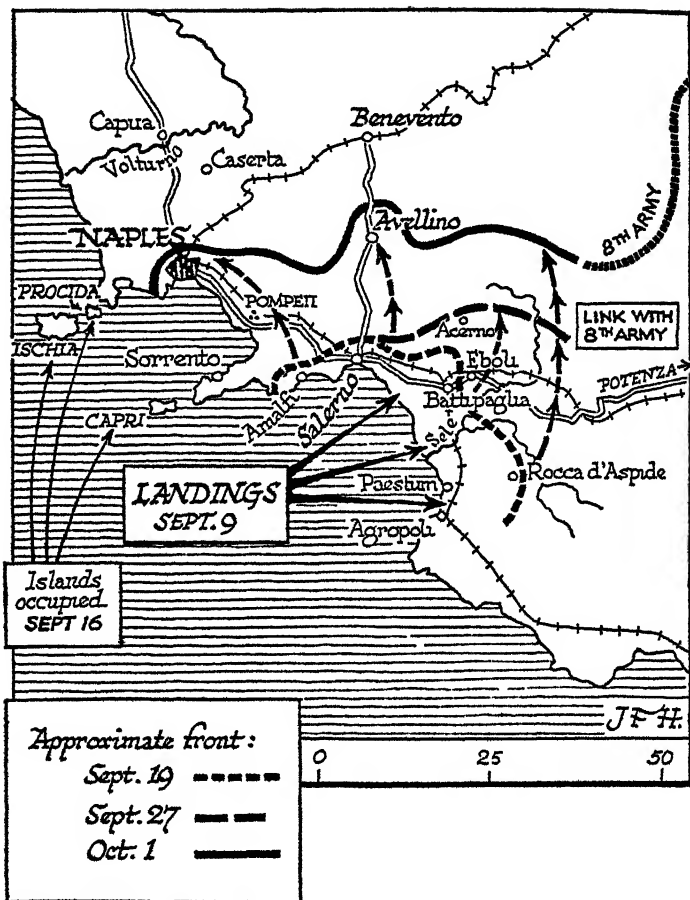


offer of mediation was declined. In his speech on 22nd February, Mr. Churchill emphasized that the British Government had never pledged itself to any specific Polish frontier; and suggested that compensation for Poland on her western side (at the expense of a Germany to whom the Atlantic Charter would not apply) was the solution visualized by London and Moscow.



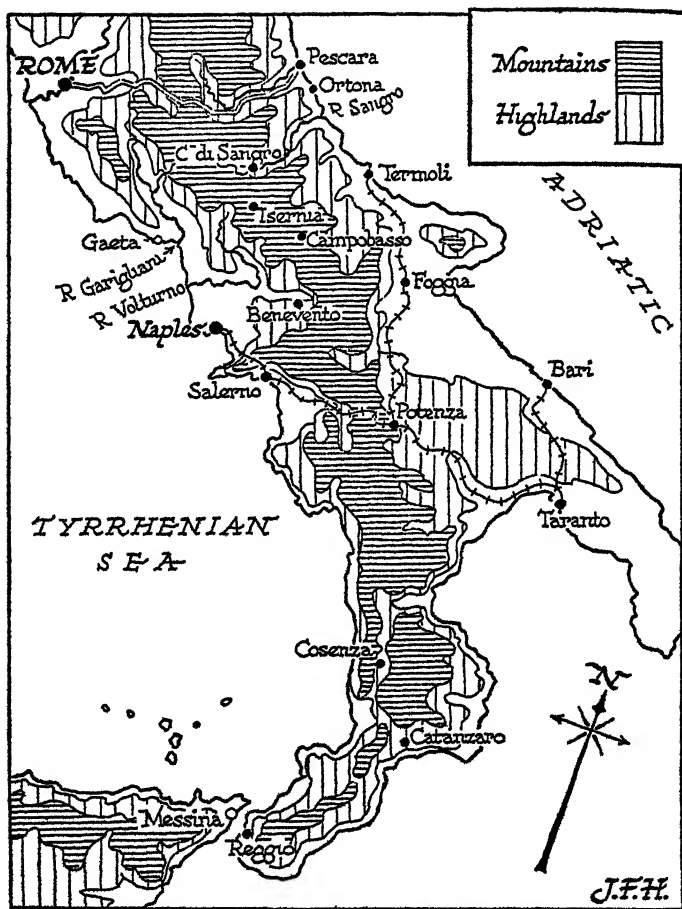
The Campaign in Italy (1)—

TROOPS of the British 8th Army landed on the “toe” of Italy on 3rd September. They advanced rapidly along the coast roads on either side of the peninsula. Other 8th Army forces landed at Taranto on 9th September, and occupied Brindisi and Bari. On the same day (the day after the official announcement of the Italian Government's surrender) the American 5th Army, with some British divisions, landed near Salerno, south of Naples. They were fiercely opposed by German troops which had been rushed southward (*cf.* rail lines of communication from the north in Map 398).



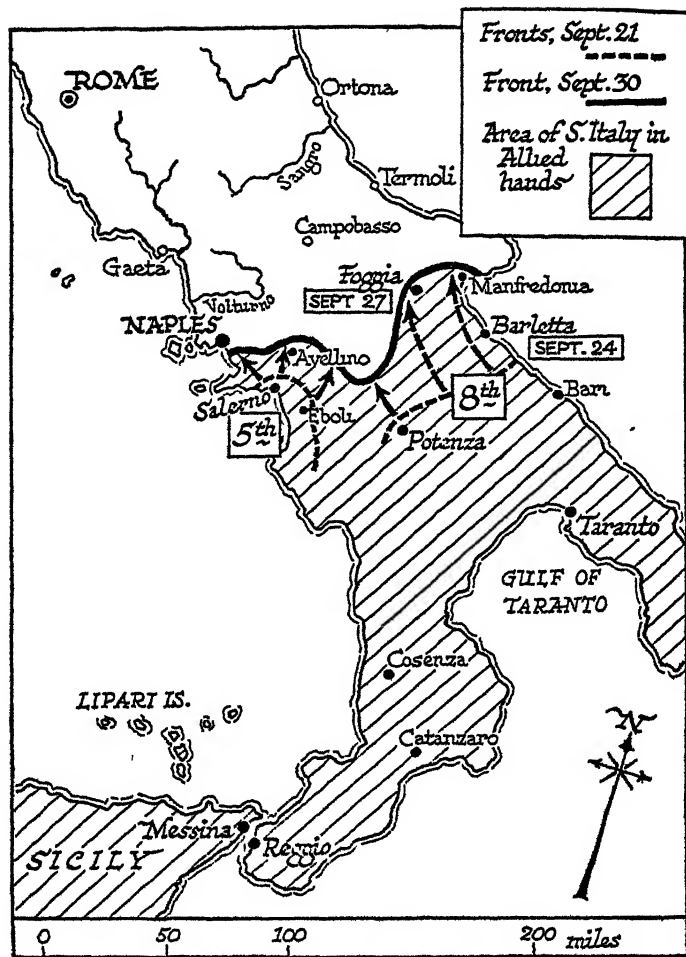
The Battles of the Salerno Beaches—

No sooner had the men of the 5th Army advanced from the landing beaches to the hills a few miles inland than they were counter-attacked by German armoured forces, and thrust back. There followed two weeks of bitter fighting, with the guns of British warships taking the place of artillery, and with bombers of the North-west African Air Force supporting our forces to the extent of as many as 2,000 sorties in one day. Berlin prematurely claimed that the 5th Army had been pushed back into the sea. Instead, its right wing pressed steadily forward, turned northward, and eventually linked up with the left of the 8th Army advancing from Potenza.



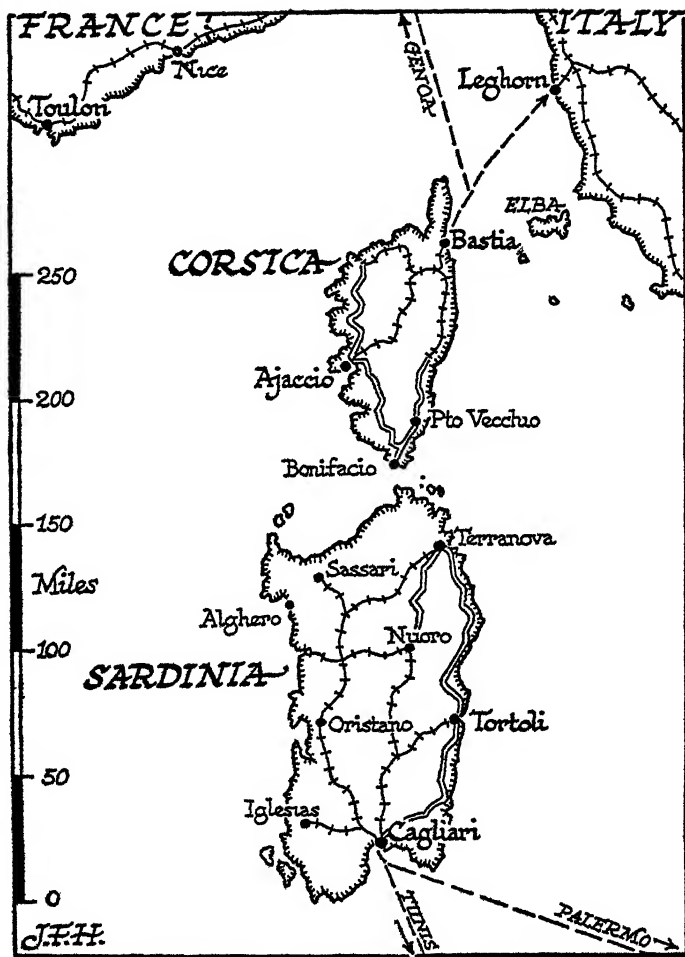
The Campaign in Italy (2)—

THE early stages of the Italian campaign had been marked by rapid successes. Only at Salerno had the Germans been able to concentrate sufficient forces to offer strong opposition to the Allied advance. But from the end of September onwards the rate of Allied progress was disappointingly slow. This was in great part due, first, to mountainous country, and, second, to long spells of more than ordinarily severe winter weather. The backbone of high mountains which runs down the centre of the Italian peninsula meant that two separate advances—of the 5th Army on the western side, and of the 8th Army on the eastern—had to be made. There was thus no completely continuous line across the peninsula. And all the small rivers running down on either side from the mountains to the sea became in winter fierce torrents which impeded attack and considerably strengthened the German defence.



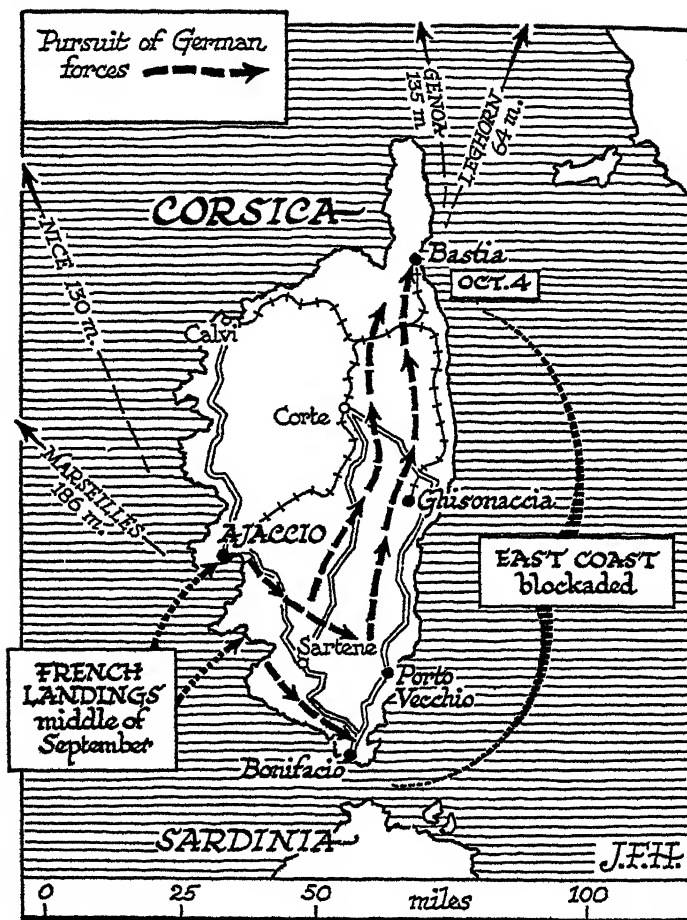
The Campaign in Italy (3)—

AFTER German resistance at Salerno had been finally overcome, the 5th Army pressed northward, entering Naples on 1st October, and at once pressing on towards the Volturno. Four days earlier the 8th Army had taken Foggia, and were moving up the east coast. They avoided any fighting for the Manfredonia peninsula by a landing at Termoli, farther up the coast, on 3rd October.



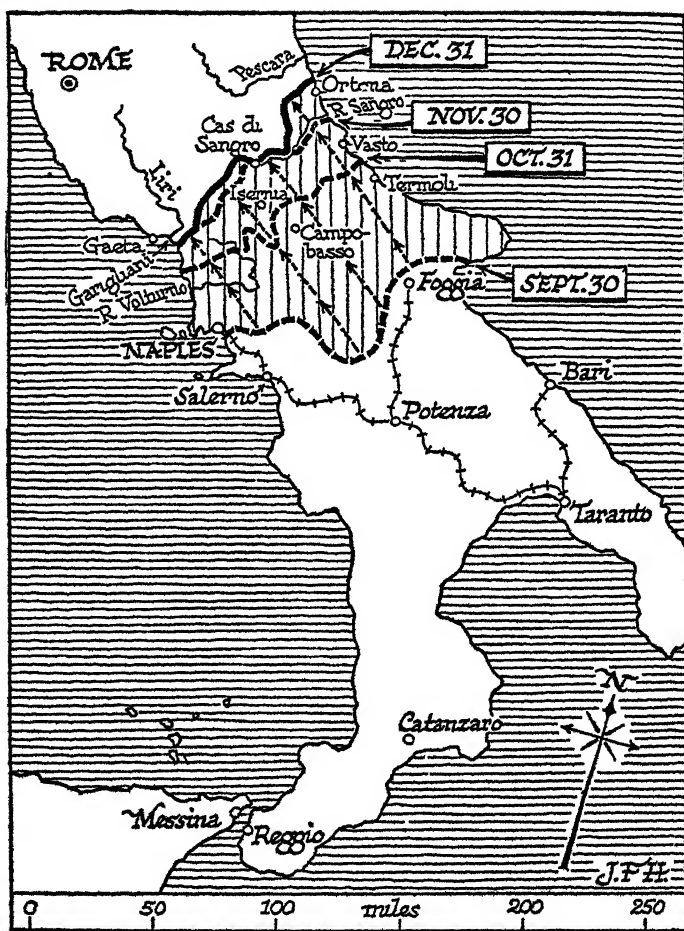
The Germans evacuate Sardinia—

IN the middle of September, while the fighting on the Salerno beaches still raged, the Germans announced their evacuation of Sardinia. Their troops went north into Corsica (see following map), whence they took ship or 'plane at Bastia—such of them, that is, as succeeded in fighting their way through the Corsican patriots—for the mainland at Leghorn. The hasty evacuation was an admission that Allied sea-power in the western Mediterranean was now irresistible, and it gave to the Allies, as well as several ports, a number of important airfields.



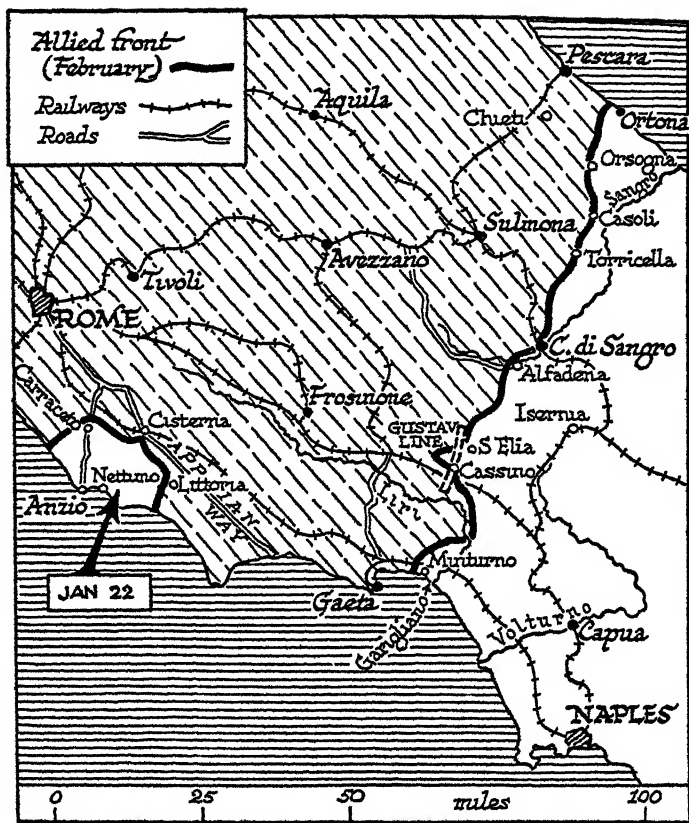
The Liberation of Corsica—

CORSICA had been occupied by the Italians directly after the fall of France in 1940. The Italian Government's surrender in September 1943 gave the signal for risings of French patriots in various parts of the island. French forces from North Africa were landed on the south-east coast, and the German troops fleeing from Sardinia were attacked as they made their way northward from Bastia. That port was captured on 4th October, and the whole island thus liberated some three weeks after the first Allied landings. The redemption of France had begun.



The Campaign in Italy (4)—

THE stages of the Allied advance in Italy up to the end of the year can be very briefly chronicled, even though, in the British Prime Minister's words on 22nd February, "battles of prolonged and intense fierceness and fury have been waged." During October the 5th Army advanced from Naples and crossed the Volturno ; while the 8th moved on from Termoli on the coast, and brought forward its line in the central mountains from Foggia to beyond Campobasso. November saw a slow and bitter advance in both coastal areas ; on the 8th Army side to the line of the Sangro. In December the 8th forced the Sangro and fought their way to Ortona ; while the 5th were engaged in bitter fighting in the mountains south-west of Castel di Sangro. Early in the New Year they reached the Garigliani and the approaches to the Liri valley. But despite the smallness of the advance, the Allied attack was holding 18 German divisions in Italy, involving, with their maintenance troops, according to the official British estimate, something like half a million men.



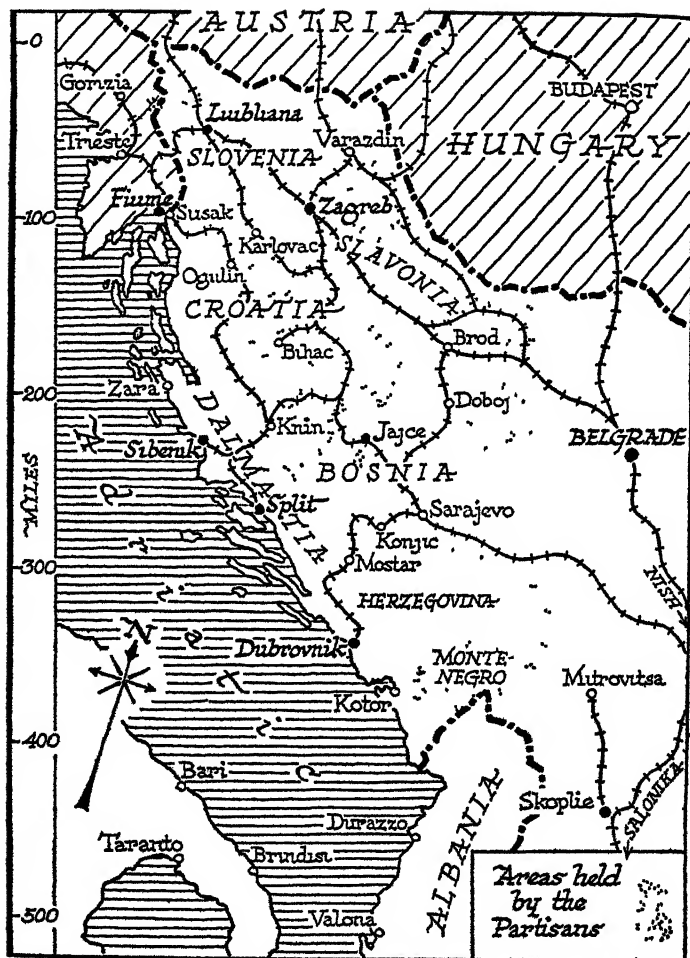
The Anzio Beach-head—

ON 22nd January 1944, Allied troops landed on beaches near Nettuno, 30 miles south of Rome, and some 50 miles behind the 5th Army front. For the first three or four days there was virtually no resistance, but no effort was made to strike far inland. Before the first week was out the Germans were counter-attacking in force. It appeared that they had brought down seven fresh divisions to the new front. "The battle for the capture of Rome," as Mr. Churchill described it, raged with fury for weeks. Ground was gained and lost on both sides. At the end of February the position was that the "Anzio beach-head" was being consolidated. The battle, said General Alexander, was now a "slogging match."

Meantime the 5th Army, in which French troops were now fighting, had pierced the strong "Gustav Line" position, and captured part of Cassino. In the middle of March an intensive Allied air attack on this place was the prelude to more desperate fighting for its possession; but by the 26th the battle was stated to be halted, again without decisive result.

Setback in the Dodecanese—

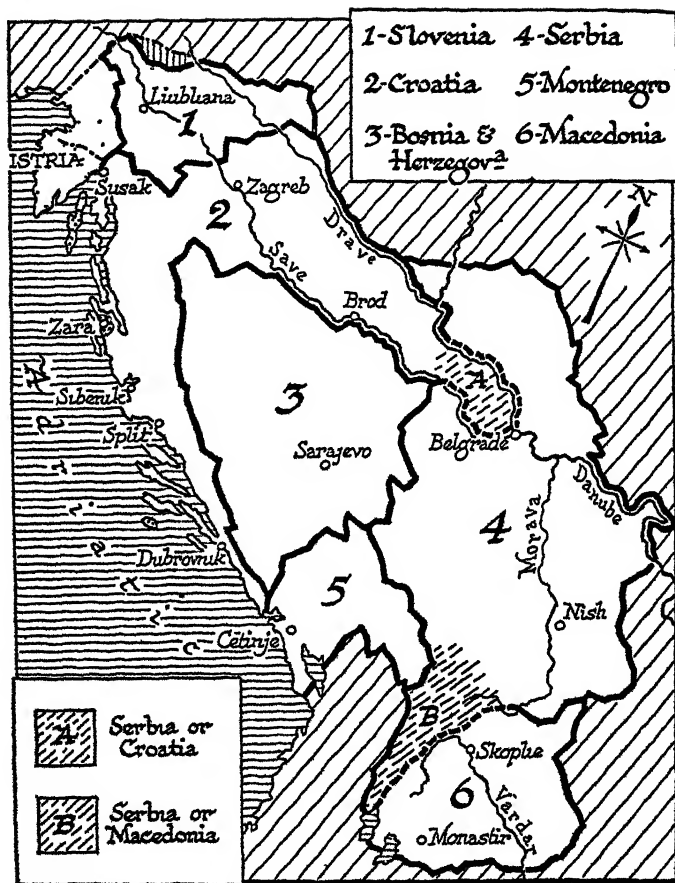
SHORTLY after the Italian surrender in September it was announced that Allied forces had landed on the Dodecanese islands of Cos and Leros, and the Greek island of Samos, immediately to the north of the Dodecanese group. In October the Germans struck back in force at Cos, and before the end of the month compelled the withdrawal of our troops from the island. A month later the garrisons of Leros and Samos were forced to surrender. The official explanation of this setback in the eastern Mediterranean (with its obviously unfortunate repercussions in Turkey) was that it had been expected that the Italian garrisons of Rhodes and Carpathos would come over to the Allies; instead of which they surrendered to the Germans. The three "key" islands of Crete, Carpathos, and Rhodes were thus still firmly in enemy possession.



Resistance grows in Yugoslavia—

FROM September onwards the Yugoslav Partisans under Marshal Tito carried on increasing resistance to the German forces of occupation. They held considerable areas of the country, and again and again struck at ports and islands on the coast. Their principal objectives were the German road and rail lines of communication. In Slovenia they were active against the railways from Liubliana to Fiume and Trieste, and operated over the Italian frontier towards Gorizia. In Slovenia they were astride the Zagreb-Brod-Belgrade railway. In Bosnia and Montenegro they were firmly established, and they struck as far east as the Belgrade-Nish-Salomika line.

Allied aid was now going to Marshal Tito instead of to General Mihailovitch, the nominee of the Yugoslav Government in Cairo ; and this constituted practical recognition of the provisional government established by the Partisans.



Yugoslavia a Federal State?—

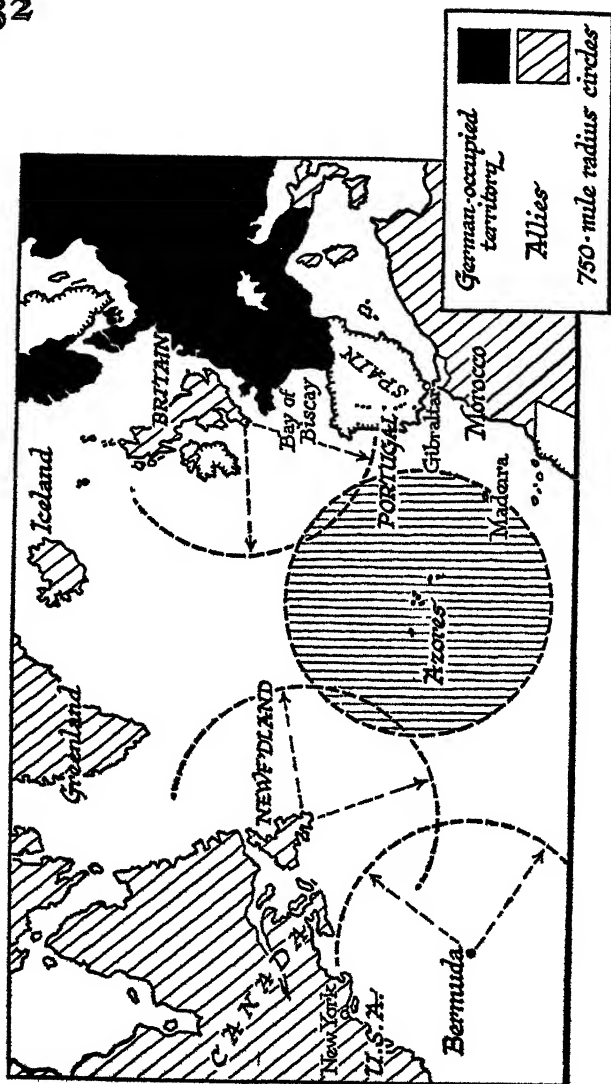
ONE main reason for the rally of Yugoslavs of all races and parties to the People's Liberation Movement under Marshal Tito's leadership was the fact that it stood for a federal solution of racial problems as against the Serb domination represented by General Mihailovitch. The Assembly of the Liberation Movement, in November 1943, proclaimed a scheme for the federal division of Yugoslavia, based in part on racial or national differences and in part on historical provinces. Two areas—A and B in the map—were not finally allocated. Under the scheme Istria (Italian) would be added to Yugoslavia, and divided between Slovenia and Croatia, and a small area of southern Austria would go to Slovenia.

The Liberation Movement and its provisional government were understood to stand for a plebiscite being held on the question of the monarchy before the return of the King to Yugoslavia.



The Position of Bulgaria—

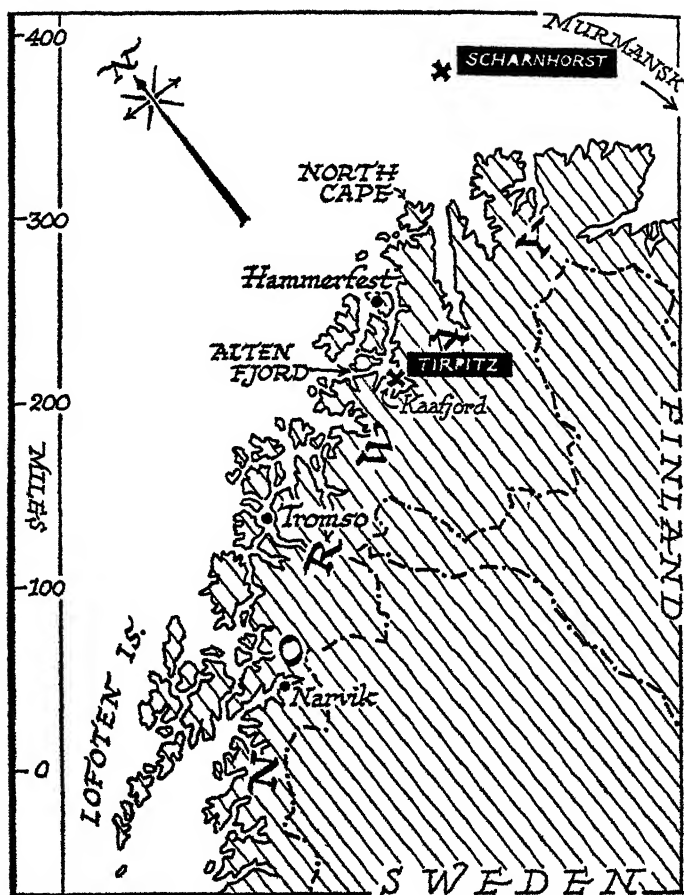
BULGARIA, at a minimum cost in men and material, has succeeded during the present war in setting up the Greater Bulgaria of which, since 1878, her more ambitious leaders had always dreamed. A large area of southern Serbia had been annexed, and also parts of Greek Macedonia, though Salonika and its hinterland remained in German military occupation. But repeated heavy Allied air attacks on Sofia have brought home to the Bulgarians the fact that these acquisitions in territory are not too securely based ; and the pro-Russian sympathies of masses of the people, stimulated by the Russian victories, together with the open control of the Bulgarian Government by the Nazis, has led to considerable internal unrest, and to repeated rumours that Bulgaria was seeking to make peace overtures to the Allies.



Allied Bases in the Azores—

IN October it was announced that Britain's historic ally, Portugal, had granted us "facilities" in the Azores, and that British forces were landing at various points in the islands. Portuguese neutrality on the European mainland was unaltered. Use of the Azores afforded Britain a magnificent sea and air base in mid-Atlantic; filling a gap in our system of Atlantic defence previously based on Newfoundland, Bermuda, and Gibraltar.

The war against the U-boat in the Atlantic went on unceasingly, and with increasing success. A statement issued in January under the authority of President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill said that in 1943 the U-boats sank only 40 per cent. of the merchant ship tonnage sunk during the previous year.



“ Tirpitz ” and “ Scharnhorst ”—

In September midget submarines of the Royal Navy penetrated Alten Fjord, in northern Norway, and inflicted heavy underwater damage to the German battleship *Tirpitz*, sister ship of the *Bismarck*, lying at anchor at the head of the fjord, and heavily protected by mines and anti-submarine nets. The Admiralty account of the exploit called it “ a very gallant enterprise ” Alten Fjord is screened from the open ocean by numerous islands and a network of narrow channels, and must have seemed to the Germans an almost impregnable base from which to attack our convoys to Russia

On 3rd April 1944, naval aircraft attacked the *Tirpitz* again, scoring 24 direct hits and leaving large fires burning on the warship.

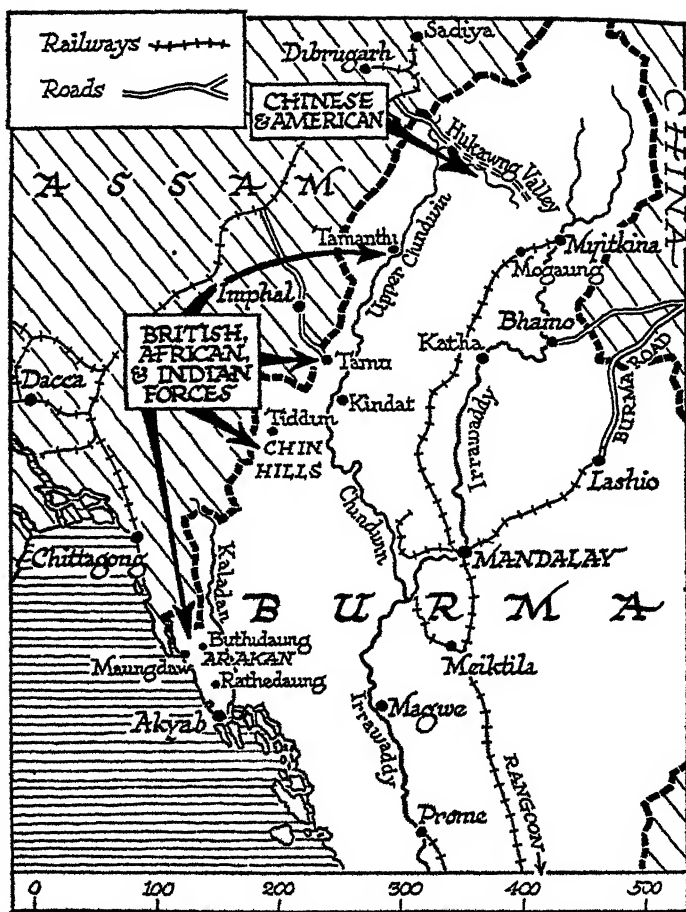
On 26th December 1943, a British convoy was passing north of the North Cape on its way to Russia, when it was attacked by the German battleship *Scharnhorst*, escorted by destroyers. The *Scharnhorst* was engaged by British cruisers, and later by the *Duke of York*, and was finally sunk after a day-long pursuit. She and her sister ship *Gneisenau* were the vessels which escaped up the Channel from Brest in February 1942, and reached German harbours.



The South-East Asia Command—

ADMIRAL LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN, appointed C-in-C. of the new South-East Asia Command, arrived in India in October, to confer with the Viceroy and with General Auchinleck, C-in-C. in India. Later he visited Chungking, to discuss war plans with Generalissimo Chiang-Kai-Shek.

The area of the South-East Asia Command covers the border countries between India and China—Burma, Siam, Indo-China, and Malaya—all now held by the Japanese ; and the first strategical objective must be the dislodgement of the enemy from Burma, and the re-opening of overland communications between China and the Bay of Bengal (see next map).

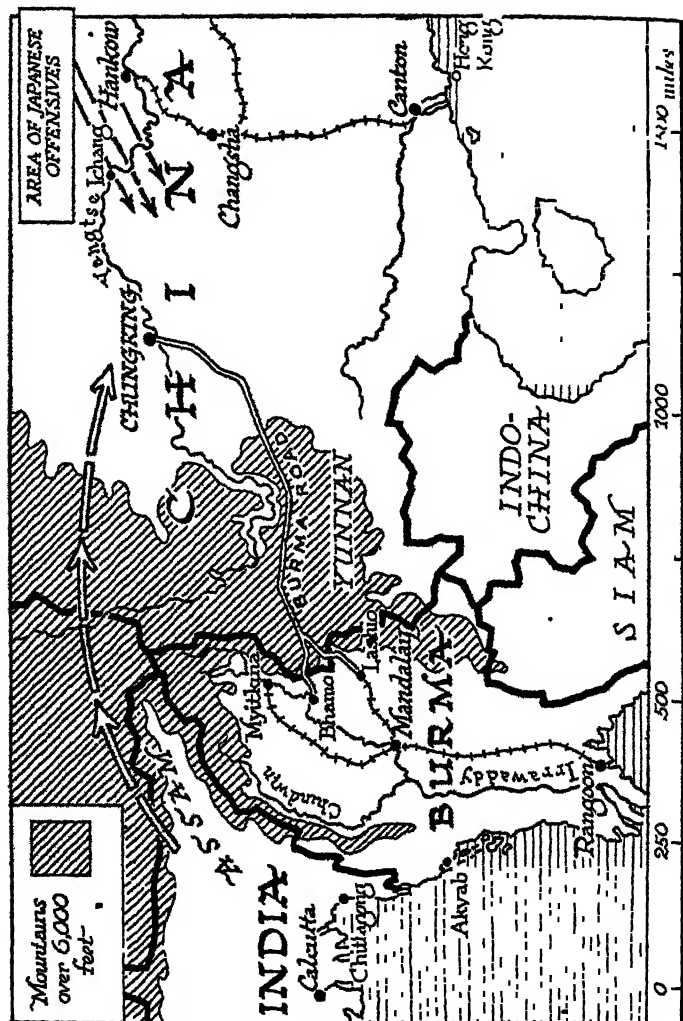


Operations in Burma—

No large-scale operations developed in Burma during the later months of 1943. Patrols were active in the Arakan area, between Maungdaw and Rathadaung; in the Chin Hills and the Tamu region of the Upper Chindwin; while in the north, American and Chinese troops under General Stillwell pushed eastward along the Hukawng Valley towards the Japanese railheads at Mogaung and Myitkina. This last operation was described by General Stillwell's headquarters as a drive "to make elbow-room for the engineers to punch through the new Ledo road from Assam to China." By the end of March General Stillwell's advanced forces were within 40 miles of Mogaung.

In March came the news that an air-borne force under General Wingate was operating in the region of Katha, and was destroying Japanese communications in northern Burma. Meantime a large-scale Japanese offensive had developed on the Indian frontier between Tiddim and Tamu, aiming at Imphal and the road to the Assam railway.

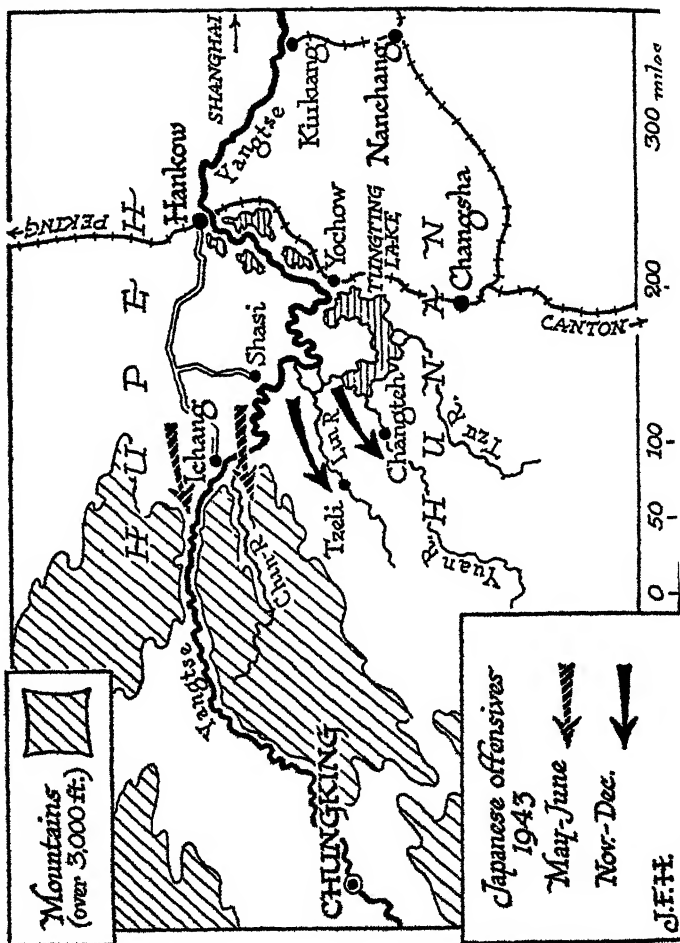
Week after week, the new unified Anglo-American Air Force in S.-E. Asia carried out constant and heavy raids on Japanese concentrations and communications.



Over the Himalayas to China—

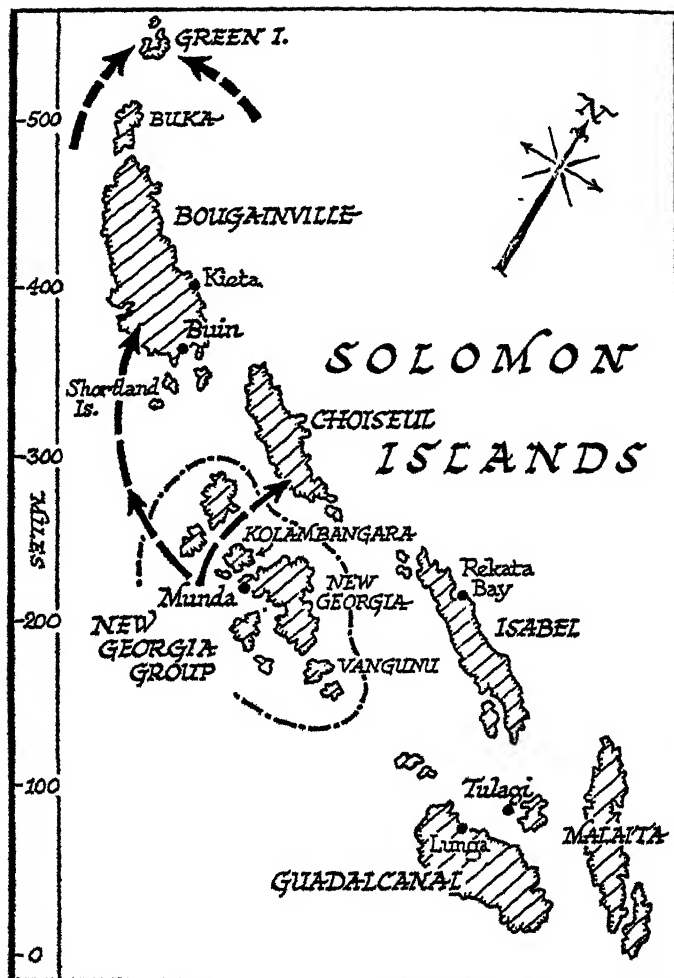
THE India-China wing of the U.S. Air Transport Command during 1943 carried out a regular air ferry service from Assam to China over the Eastern Himalayas—"the Hump," as its pilots irreverently describe it. It was officially stated at the end of the year that it had by then become possible to transport a greater monthly quantity of military supplies to the Chinese than had ever been carried by the Burma Road.

This ferry service has played a considerable part in enabling General Chennault's American Army Air Force within China to engage in increasingly effective operations against the Japanese (*cf.* next page) including the bombing of such distant enemy bases as those in Indo-China and Formosa.



The War in China—

THE Japanese offensive in May-June 1943 from Ichang against the Yangtse gorges and the valley of the Chin River (see Vol. VIII, Map 389) was followed in November and December by attacks made from Shasi, lower down the Yangtse, along the Lin River towards Tzeh, and south of that again to Changteh. The last-named city was taken by the enemy after a heroic resistance, and then re-captured by the Chinese. There was also an unsuccessful Japanese offensive southward from the Tungting Lake, aimed at Changsha. Before the end of the year the enemy forces were in retreat in all three areas. General Chennault's Air Force played an important part in the Japanese repulse.



The Western Pacific :

(1) The Solomons—

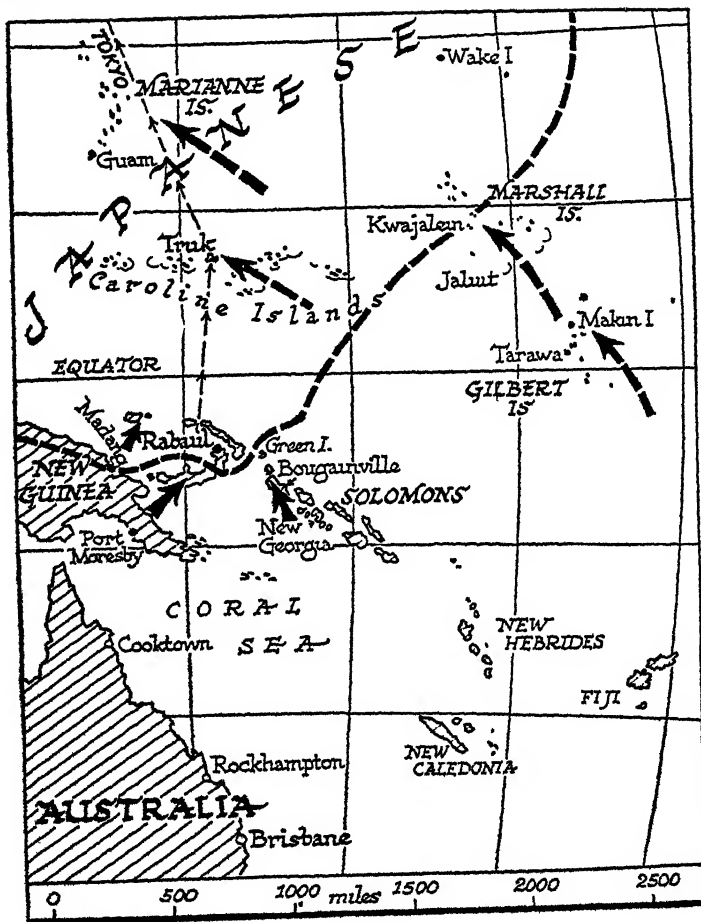
THE announcement that the American advance in the Solomon Islands had cleared the enemy from the New Georgia group by the end of August (see Vol VIII, Map 385) was premature. The Japanese hung on in Kolombangara until the end of September, but early in October the Americans were in occupation of all the islands. Previous to this, the Japanese had evacuated their base at Rekata Bay (Isabel Island). Early in November the Americans landed on Choiseul and on the south-western coast of Bougainville. Allied warships and planes were busy in the seas around Buka, the most northerly of the Solomons; and on 14th February an Allied force landed on Green Island, thus completing the campaign for the Solomons, and cutting off the retreat of the 20,000 Japanese still in the northern parts of Bougainville and Choiseul. During March the Japanese in the former island made desperate but unavailing efforts to dislodge the Americans from their positions.



The Western Pacific: (2) New Guinea and New Britain—

THE Australian forces in New Guinea captured Salamaua on 13th September, and Lae three days later. A fresh landing was made on 22nd September, north of Finschafen, and that place occupied on 2nd October. Other forces advanced up the Markham Valley towards Madang, cutting off the Japanese in the Huon peninsula.

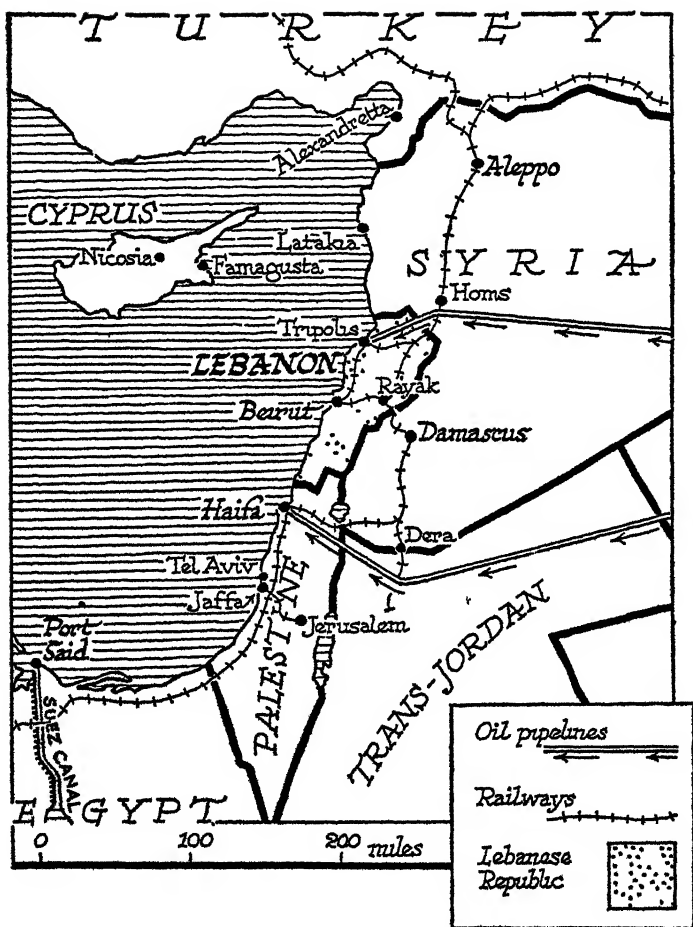
With the New Guinea coastline thus cleared, landings were made on New Britain—near Cape Merkus on 15th December, and at Cape Gloucester on the 26th—and the Japanese began to retreat towards Rabaul. Naval and air attacks on that main Japanese base were persistently heavy, and by the middle of February it was reported to be “virtually abandoned.” The seizure of the Admiralty Islands put the Allies in command of all the enemy lines of communication running through the Bismarck Archipelago; and it was estimated by the U.S. War Department (2nd April) that some 100,000 Japanese were isolated in New Britain, New Ireland, the northern Solomons, and other islands. Nine out of every ten of the ships bringing them supplies were being sunk.



The Western Pacific :

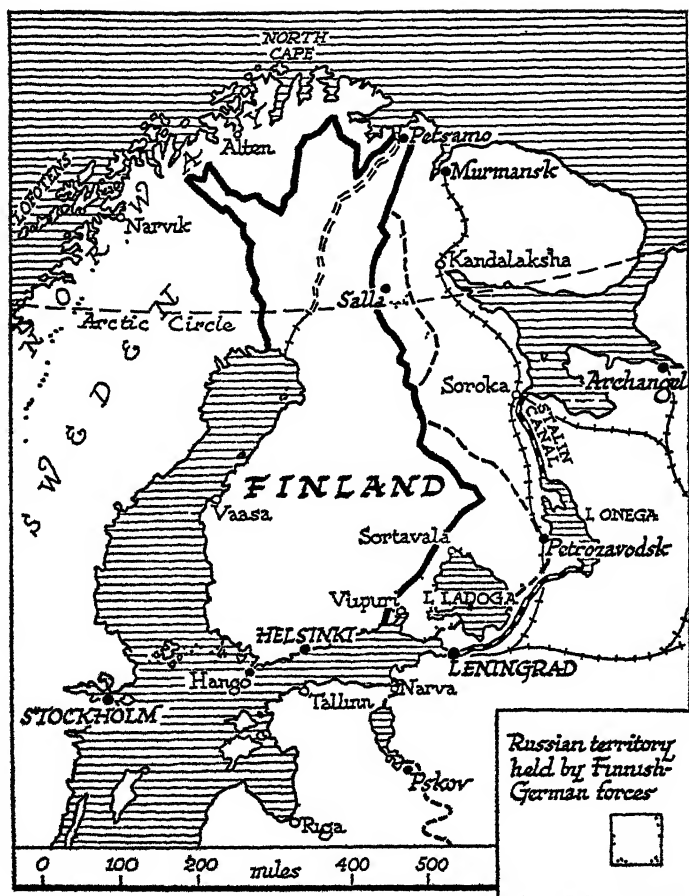
(3) New Objectives—

A NEW Pacific offensive was opened by the Americans when, in November, strong forces attacked the Gilbert Islands, 1,200 miles north-west of the Solomons, and landed troops on Tarawa and Makin Islands. A series of heavy air attacks preluded an attack, at the end of January, on the Marshall Islands, and the Kwajalein Atoll, a valuable sea base, was captured and occupied. During February Truk, the main Japanese base in the Carolines, was heavily shelled and bombed ; and a few days after this an American fleet attacked various islands in the Marianne group, still nearer to Japan. Early in April Truk was again attacked, and the American offensive carried still farther west to the Palau Islands (west of the Carolines). American sea-power, in fact, was beginning to cut into the Japanese lines of communication with their southernmost conquests ; and very heavy naval losses were inflicted on the enemy in these and subsidiary operations.



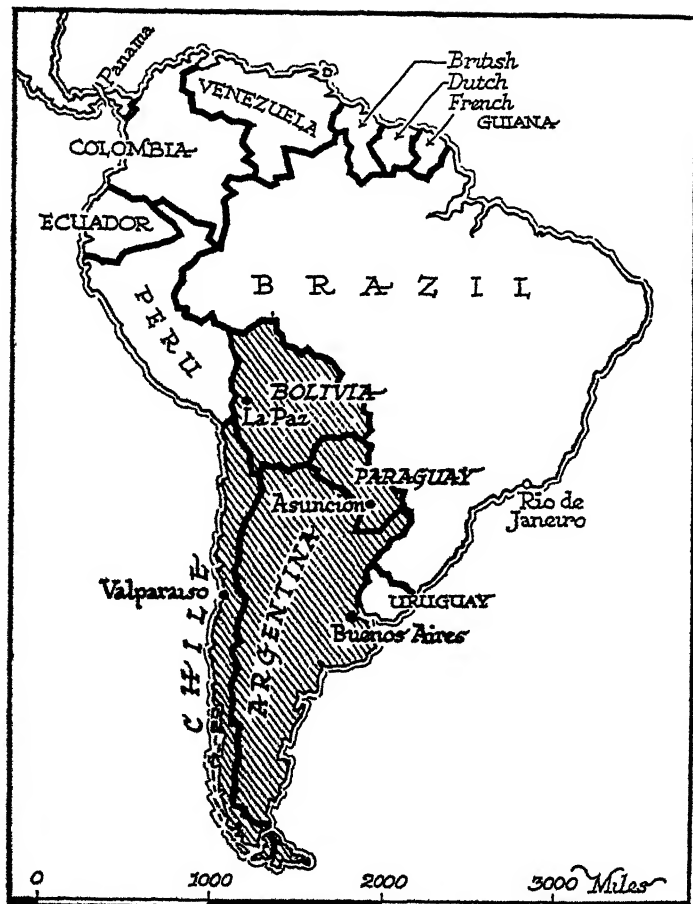
Trouble in Lebanon—

EARLY in November an unhappy situation came to a head in the Lebanon (the south-western part of French-mandated Syria) which had been administered by the Free French in co-operation with the British military authorities. The heads of the Lebanese Republican Government, which had been pressing its demands for the full self-government promised to them, were arrested and interned by order of the Free French Delegate-General. There were immediately sharp protests by the heads of all the neighbouring Arab States ; and the British Government, which had backed the French guarantees of Lebanese independence, insisted that the strategic importance of the country and the general military situation in the Middle East made conciliatory measures necessary. The French National Committee at Algiers recalled the Delegate-General, and General Catroux was sent to the Lebanon to restore good relations and " to negotiate measures for the rapid re-establishing of the country's constitutional life." In this he was completely successful.



The Finns discuss Peace Terms—

THE German reverses south of Leningrad in January were quickly followed by reports that the Government of Finland was seeking to discuss peace terms with the Soviet Government. Early in February Dr Paasikivi, a former Finnish Prime Minister, and M. Erkko, a former Finnish Foreign Secretary, were in Stockholm, and had met Mme. Kollontay, the Soviet ambassador to Sweden. Later in the month the terms proposed by Russia (and communicated by the Soviet Government to the British and American Governments) were made known. The main points were the maintenance of the frontiers fixed after the Russo-Finnish war of 1939-40, and the internment of the German troops in Finland (These forces, under General Dietl, were mainly in the north of the country, in the Petsamo and Salla sectors). The peace negotiations continued during March, but on 23rd April it was announced that they had definitely broken down.

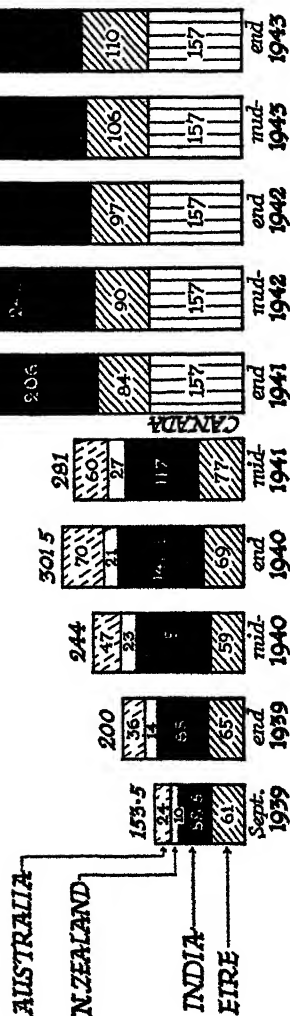


Pro-German Forces in South America—

EVENTS in the Argentine Republic gave colour to the belief in Allied countries that the Government was actively sympathetic to, if it was not actually aiding, Germany. President Ramirez instituted a campaign against "Communist" and Jewish elements, and a virtual state of siege was declared, limiting the freedom of the press, and placing all means of communication under the direct control of the War Minister. British and American requests for the expulsion of Nazi agents were ignored. On the last day of 1943 the Government decided to dissolve all political parties.

During January it was announced that President Ramirez had decided to break off relations with Germany and Japan. But in February an army officers' revolt deposed the President, and put General Farrell, the War Minister, in his place; and there was little doubt that the change had been made in order to prevent Argentina from lining up with the Allies. Chile and Paraguay, as well as Bolivia (where a change of government had occurred which the U.S. refused to recognize) all hastened to "recognize" General Farrell's government, thus isolating themselves, under Argentine leadership, from the rest of the South American republics.

Figures in £ millions



Britain's War Debts—

So much has been heard of Lend-Lease and Mutual Aid that it may be thought that war debts between the Allies have been avoided in this war. This diagram, partly based on estimates, shows that this is far from the truth so far as Britain is concerned. It shows that our debts to the Empire rose to over £1,000 millions by the end of last year; and in addition allowance should be made for debts to the colonies, amounts held in special accounts for other countries such as Argentina, and sums accumulated on behalf of Middle Eastern countries where there has been big military expenditure by Britain.

The figure shown for Canada represents an interest-free loan given by the Dominion early in 1942 at a time when Canada's accumulation of sterling had reached about £160 millions. At the same time, Canada made a most generous gift of £225 millions to the United Kingdom.

It will be seen that the debt to India dominates the whole diagram and is the main factor behind the inflation in that country.

Figures in £ millions

SPENDING -

Sinking Funds
and
Miscellaneous
Issues

Expenditure

Revenue

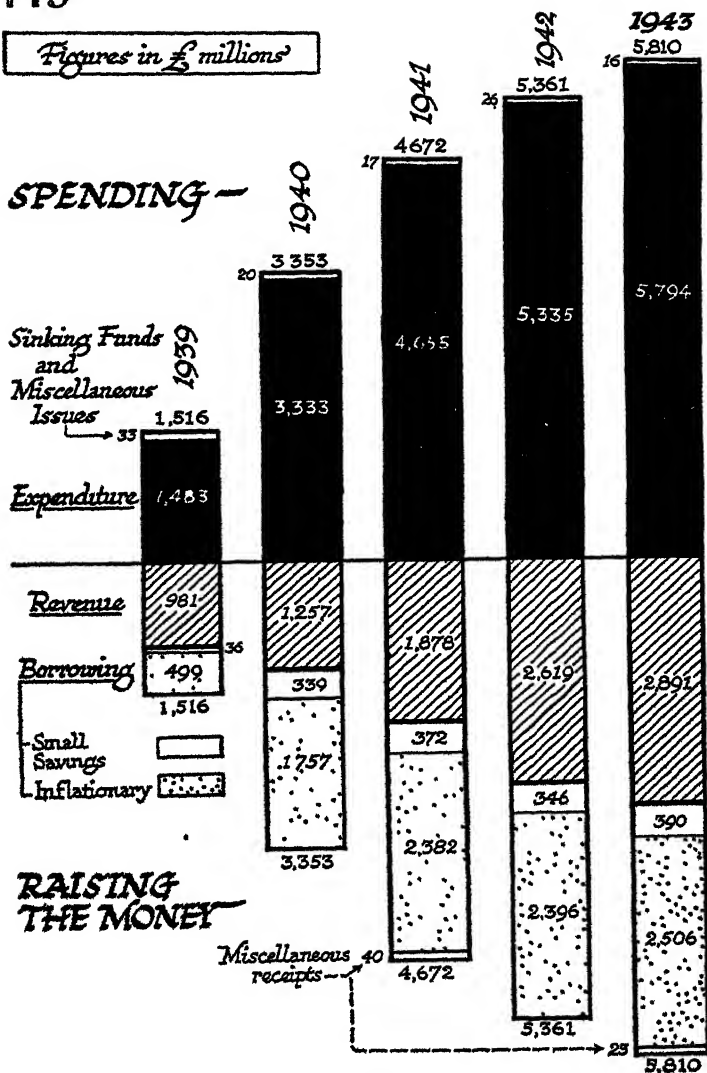
Borrowing

Small
Savings

Inflationary

RAISING THE MONEY

Miscellaneous
receipts

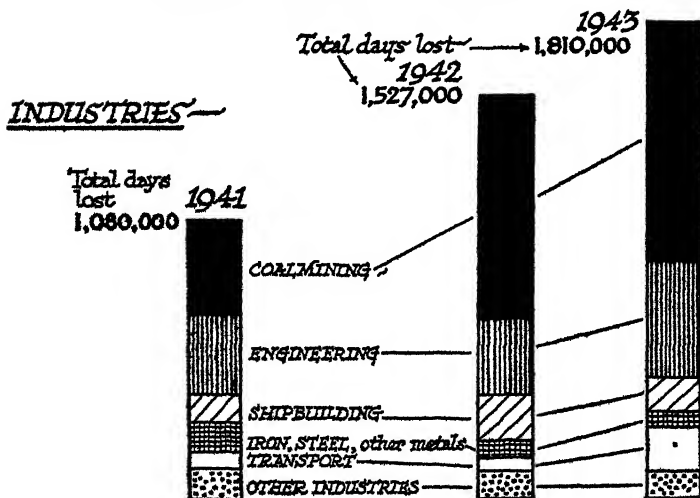
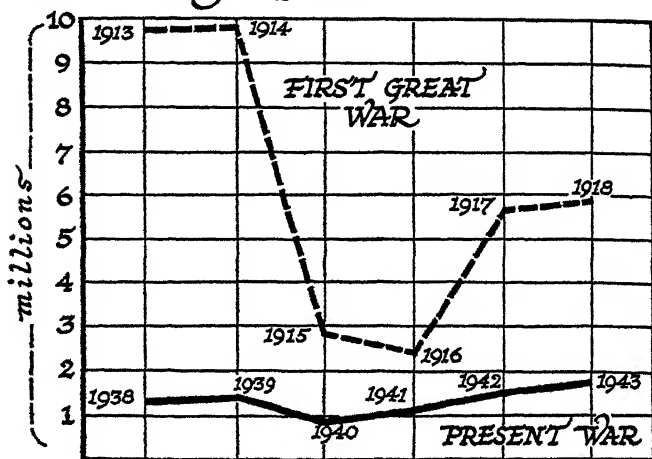


Financing British Expenditure—

THIS diagram brings up to date No. 251 of Vol. 5 and shows how the country's budgetary problem has been met. Expenditure has increased fourfold since 1939, whereas revenue is not quite three times as high as it was. The deficit has been met by borrowing, which is divided into small savings, floating debt, and other borrowing. Roughly speaking, only the first form of borrowing is non-inflationary; the other two, which mostly consist of borrowing from banks, companies, and so on, do not represent abstention from consumption.

From this diagram it would seem that too large a part of the Government's expenditure has been met by inflationary borrowing. On the other hand, it should be remembered that inflation is also being combated by other means, such as price control and rationing.

Number of Working Days lost:-

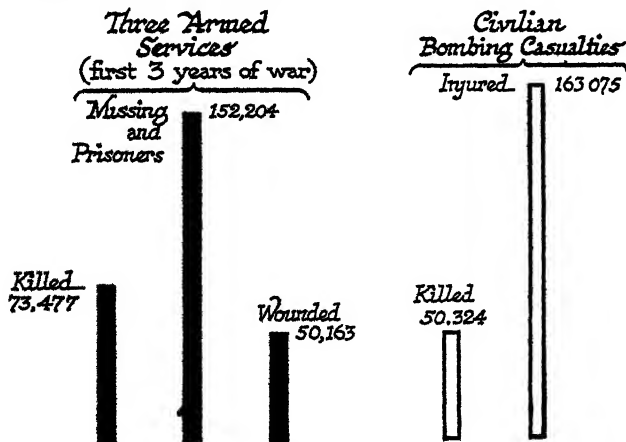
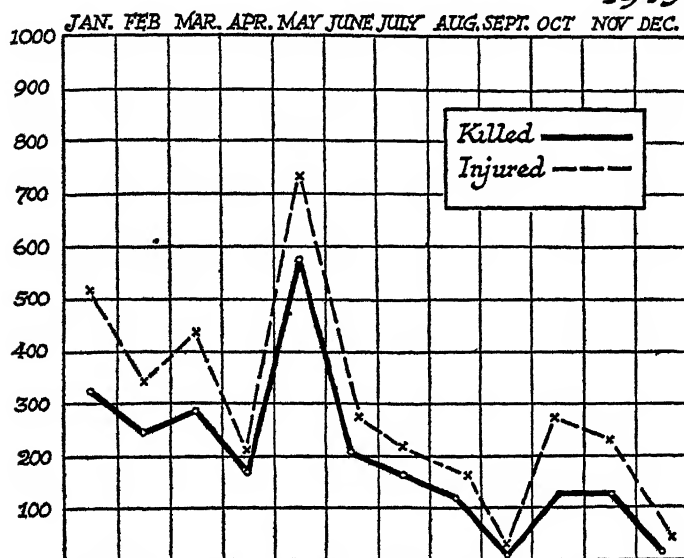


Trade Disputes—

THIS diagram brings up to date No 395 in Vol. 8. In 1943, more working days were lost in coal-mining than in any other industry, but it will also be seen that the days lost in the transport industry showed a considerable rise. It should be pointed out that, in relation to the hours worked, the hours lost in trade disputes is a very small proportion indeed.

448 Air-raid Casualties—

1943



American Inflation—

THE economic phenomenon of the war in the United States has been the astounding way in which the income of the people has increased. The total output of the American community has virtually doubled, and people have, of course, been paid more for this higher output.

The diagram shows what they have done with the money. They have spent \$25 billions more on consumption goods of all kinds. (Part of this went in higher prices, but most of it in using up a volume of goods and services that was actually higher in war-time than in peace-time.) Taxes and savings taken together increased from less than \$8 billions to \$39 billions. (In this diagram, "savings" means the purchase of War Loan and similar deliberate investment of money.)

But in spite of all this, the loose cash available for spending—currency and bank deposits—increased by \$10 billions. It is this cash, jingling dangerously in the pockets of the American people, that creates the risk of inflation.

Air-raid Casualties—

GERMAN raids on this country declined considerably in weight and effectiveness during the last half of 1943; and the casualty figures for September (5 persons killed) were actually the lowest since May 1940, *i.e.* since before the "blitz" began. In December they were only slightly higher. With the new year, attacks by the Luftwaffe on London and other places were resumed in greater strength.

The comparative figures of casualties in the armed services and among civilians were quoted by Mr. Herbert Morrison in a speech made in February 1944.

